

A PRACTICAL
DISCOURSE
UPON THE
Blessed Sacrament:
SHEWING THE
DUTIES
OF THE
COMMUNICANT
Before, at, and after the
Eucharist.

By EDW. PELLING, D. D. Chaplain to
his Grace the Duke of Somerset, and
Rector of *Petworth* in *Sussex*.

L O N D O N,
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*Ra. Barker R. R. in Chri-
sto P. ac D. D. Johanni
Archiep. Cant. à Sacris
Domesticis.*

2005108

To her Grace, the most
Noble, most Virtuuous,
and Religious Lady,
Elizabeth, Lady Dutch-
els of Somerset.

May it please your Grace,

THE kind Acceptance which my
former Discourse upon this Subject
found at your Graces hands, hath
given me Encouragement and Con-
fidence to prefix your great Name to this;
which indeed should have been presented to
your Noble Patronage long ago, but that the late
Controversies with the Romanists (wherein I
thought my self bound to take my share) and a
great many unexpected Accidents since, have
hitherto hindred me from bringing it even to
that little Perfection wherein it now appears.
Besides, Madam, the Subject being altogether
Practical and directive of the Conscience,
a little time was not enough for that Consider-
ation and Care, which a matter of such a
tender and weighty Nature must require, e-
specially since my design from the beginning,
was, not only to inform Communicants, but
moreover to lend such Assistance to all others,

The Dedication.

in order to a right understanding of their Duty, as I hoped might serve to promote the great Ends of Christianity in general. To this purpose, I have somewhat largely and particularly discoursed of these things which concern all sorts and ranks of Christians, as Faith, Repentance, Charity, and Perseverance; to which I thought fit to add in the last place, a short Platform of a Christian Life, collected out of the Holy Scriptures, and digested into little, that every one may see, as it were at one view, the Nature, Excellence, and easiness of that Universal Obedience which the New Covenant exacteth at all our Hands: and all this I resolved and endeavoured to do in such a plain and clear manner, that I might be serviceable to those of the most ordinary and vulgar Capacities, because they need Instructions most of all.

I confess, Madam, that in saying this, I seem to have made an Objection against my self, as to this Dedication; and fear that all those who have the Honour to know your Grace, will be startled to see a little Book, intended for ordinary Capacities, presented to a Person of such eminent Parts and Judgment, as well as Quality. But I hope the wonder will cease, when once it is considered, that the whole design of this Piece being to excite and quicken Men to a serious Practice of Religion, I could not but look upon it as your Graces due
were

The Dedication.

were there no other reason but this, that your Grace is a great Example of Virtue and a truly Christian Life in all particulars; which, God be thanked, I can very safely affirm and tell the whole World, without the least guilt of Flattery. But besides, Madam, my Personal Obligations to both your Graces, for your great and continual Favours to me and mine, and the tenderness you are pleased to shew us daily, do challenge from me all possible Expressions of Honour, and dutiful Affection; and all too little, I am sure; not any thing indeed in comparison of that Service which I should, and with all my Heart would do, were it in my Power. Among some Discouragements I have met with in the World, I bless God, the great comfort of my life is, that I enjoy so plentiful a share of your Graces goodness, with all Freedom and Gratitude I acknowledge my self to be in that respect, as happy a Man as lives. The Station I am now in, I was unexpectedly put into by the desire of both your Graces, and by your Zealous Applications to some great Friends, who could have no other reason to consider me but for the sake of your Graces, whom they were ready to gratifie for your being such true Friends and Ornaments to our Church, and the whole Protestant Religion. Your thus transplanting me into your Graces own Neighbourhood, as it was an argument

The Dedication.

of the most kind Intentions, that I should
spring and thrive afresh under the influence
of your Favour; so is it a mighty Advan-
tage to my Ministry, which is now assisted
with such Noble Comments upon Christianity,
and Examples of it, as may prove more o-
perative than any Discourses of mine. Upon
these Accounts, Madam, all the labours I
can bestow, can be but so many Expressions
of Thankfulness; which I humbly intreat
both your Graces to accept of, being all that
I can tender, besides my earnest Supplicati-
ons to Almighty God, evermore to continue
and encrease his Goodness to your Graces and
your Noble Issue; and to enrich you with all
the Blessings of Heaven and Earth; which
is, Madam, the daily Affectionate Prayer
of

Petworth,
Feb 20.
1694

Your Graces most Humble,

Faithful, and Obedient

Servant and Chaplain,

Edw. Pelling.

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CHAP. I.

Of the Necessity of Receiving the Holy Sacrament.

THOUGH Notions are for the most part more Difficult, and of far less Concernment for men to Understand, than their Duty; yet such is the general Curiosity of People, that they are more intent upon Speculations, than upon Practice, and study more to be Masters of an Opinion, than to inform and keep a good Conscience.

HOWEVER, in regard that Knowledge is the Principle of Action, and Men are so governed by their Perswasions, that their Practice is ever suitable to their Sentiments, the most natural way of prevailing upon them to comply with their Duty, is to instruct their Understandings in the first place, and to furnish them with such Notions as may have a due influence upon them, and do naturally tend to
B prompt

prompt them on to that business which lyeth before them.

THIS is the Reason, that when I entred upon the Subject of the Holy Sacrament, I thought it advisable for me to *Divide* my Meditations; so that I might first dispatch the *Notional* part, which is of the greatest Difficulty; and then proceed to the *Practical*, which is of the greatest Use.

PURSUANT to this Design, I have formerly discoursed at large of the Nature, of the Ends, of the Dignity, and Usefulness of this weighty Ordinance; which things if Men would but seriously consider and carry in their Thoughts, they could not easily neglect a matter of such importance, without offering violence to their Judgments, and acting against their own Reason.

BUT there is a great deal of matter yet behind, which immediately and directly serveth to engage all of us to discharge our Duty in this particular, and also to govern us in the discharging of it. And the first thing that offers it self to our Consideration, is touching that *Necessity* which lyeth upon us, to eat of this Bread, and to drink of this Cup.

NOW in order to our better proceeding upon this Subject, we must note, that there is a Twofold Necessity which relateth to the

the matter in hand. 1. First, Some things are *Absolutely* and *Indispensably* Necessary, because they are the fixt and immovable Conditions of the New Covenant, without the performance whereof, Salvation cannot be expected by us. So, to Believe in Christ, to Mortifie our Lusts, to have a Sanctified Spirit, to be Humble, Charitable, and the like; these things are *Absolutely* Necessary; for without Faith, and Repentance, and entire Holiness of heart, none of us *can see the Lord*. 2. Secondly, Some things are Necessary *Respectively* and upon Supposition; that is, supposing that there is some Command for them, though they be not necessary in their own Nature, but are required chiefly to try and Exercise Mens Obedience: Or supposing that they are appointed as certain and effectual *Means*, in order to some great and Necessary End; and as Instruments to bring us those Mercies, which our Souls stand in need of. Now, when we say, 'tis Necessary to receive the Sacraments of Christs Body and Blood; the meaning is not, that it is absolutely, simply, indispensably, and universally necessary, so that no Man can possibly be saved without it. For no *Rites* whatsoever are to be accounted of equal moment with substantial Morality; and

things of Positive Institution, though they be necessary in their Kind and Quality, yet they are not necessary in that degree, as those things are which are good in themselves, and which carry an eternal Reason and Obligation along with them. In some cases a Ritual Ordinance may be omitted; and it is not the bare *Omission*, but the wilful Neglect and *Contempt* of it, that is Criminal in God's account. This is evident from the case of Circumcision, which was of old a Seal of the Covenant between God and the Jews. We find in the fourth of *Exodus*, that when *Moses* wilfully forbore to Circumcise his Son, the anger of the Lord was so kindled against him, that *he met him in his Journey, and sought to kill him*; and as some *Hebrew* Doctors tell us, did actually smite him with a sudden Disease; and yet we find in the 5th of *Joshua*, that afterwards the Jews omitted Circumcision for many years together in the Wilderness: whether it was, because they were then upon their Travel (as some think) or because they were not yet mingled with the Heathens, and so needed not as yet to be Circumcised (as others are of opinion) this is certain, that we do not read that God was displeased with them for not having been

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Circumcised, though he was often displeased with them for their *Infidelity*.

THE same thing is observed of the Pass-
over it self; that it was omitted in the
Wilderness for about forty years together; <sup>*Vid. Selden
de Synedr.
Lib. 2. Cap.*</sup> 2.

because the Celebration of it depended upon the use of Circumcision. For in order to the due Celebration of the Passover, it was necessary not only for the Fathers of Families to be Circumcised themselves, but moreover for all the Males in their Households to be Circumcised too, *Exod.* 12. 48, 49. So that Circumcision being pretermitted for so many years, the Celebration of the Passover did also of course cease for that time.

HENCE we may easily collect, that things of Positive Institution are not equally necessary with those Duties which are naturally and eternally good. In like manner, when the Jews were in Captivity, and could not Solemnly present themselves before God in his Sanctuary, the Law was not executed upon them: As long as they were in those sad Circumstances, it was their Unhappiness and Punishment that they could not go with their Lambs to the Temple, but 'twas not their sin that they did it not.

THUS it was with the Jews under the Law, as to things of this Nature; and thus

it is too with People under the Gospel, as to matters of the *like* Condition. *Baptism* now is necessary ; yet not so necessary as *Faith* and *Regeneration* ; nor must we presume to say, that all Persons who die Unbaptized are everlastingly miserable : For though it be said *St. Mark 16. 16. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved* ; yet in the next words, *Damnation is the Punishment of Unbelief only* ; it is not said, *He that is not Baptized shall be Damned*. *Baptism* is indeed the standing and ordinary Means, which we are tied to use ; but it doth not follow that God so tieth up his own hands, that he cannot, by *Virtue* of his unlimited *Prerogative*, dispense with a *Rite*, and shew his *Mercy* at his *Pleasure*. 'Tis even thus in the case concerning the receiving of *this* blessed *Sacrament*. It is an *Ordinance* of *Divine Institution*, and so it is *communiter & ordinariè*, in its *Kind* ; and in a general construction necessary to *Eternal Happiness*. But yet some Persons are not capable, nor in a condition to prepare themselves for it, as *Children*, and *Lunatics*, and the like : Now, in such a case, the *Rule* is, that no man is obliged to act *nisi positis omnibus ad agendum requisitis*, unless there be a sufficient presence

sence of all Qualifications that are necessary for the Action: Or some inevitable cross Accident may unexpectedly happen, so that a Man cannot eat that Bread with his Mouth which his Soul longeth after: And in this case the Rule is, that no man is bound to Impossibilities; nor shall any one be condemned for not performing that which is out of his reach and power: Ones case may be such, that it may not be in his Power to receive; and therefore to communicate of the outward *Symbols* is not so absolutely necessary, as it is to *Believe* and *Repent*.

HOWEVER, out of these two Cases, it is very highly necessary to receive the Sacramental Bread and Wine; that is, supposing a Man be *capable* of Receiving, so that he cannot plead want of *Understanding*, or want of due *Information*; at least, cannot pretend that he wants *Means* of being instructed: And supposing that he hath *Occasions* and *Opportunities* of Receiving, so that he cannot plead want of Time or Power (and I am sure this cannot be our Plea, who have been bred up under the Instructions of a most indulgent and provident Church) in this case (I say) the Receiving of the Sacrament is so necessary, that the neglect of it makes Men very guilt

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ty of Sin, especially if that Neglect be customary and habitual, as indeed it is in very many Professors of Christ's Religion.

THE Sinfulness and Danger of this Negligence is fairly proveable from the bare Analogy that is between this, and those Sacrificial Banquets of old, especially the Paschal Feast. Such as might celebrate it, and refus'd to do it, were under God's Wrath and Curse; so that if a Man was *clean, and not in a Journey*, and yet forbore to keep the Passover, that *Soul was to be cut off from his People*, Numb. 9. 13. Now if the Sin was so great in *that* case, where they saw nothing but a Figure and a Shadow, it cannot but be far greater in this case, where Men have the Body and Substance. To be sure, the Guilt cannot be less, in an instance that is of a more Noble and Excellent Nature: Nor can we suppose, that when Christ instituted a better Ordinance, he should abate of our Duty; or that Mens despising of such an important, fixt, and permanent Solemnity is not Criminal, when it was such a Sin to disregard a temporary and vanishing Rite, which our Redeemer did put an end to. But if this Argument be not enough, the wickedness of Men in this case is further demonstrable, from a threefold Con-

Consideration. 1. It is a direct Act of Disobedience against Christ's plain and peremptory Command. 2. It proceedeth mainly from an evil Conscience. 3. It is a most injurious Sin against a Mans own Soul.

1. IT is a direct Act of Disobedience against Christ's plain and peremptory Command. Concerning the Institution of this Mystery, these four things are very observable. 1. That the Command about the Celebration of it, is as strict and Imperial, as any other Law whatsoever, that is about things which are of a *moral* nature, and of Eternal Obligation. *Take and Eat*, saith our Lord, *Matth. 26.* and *Do this in remembrance of me* : So St. Luke delivers it, *Luk. 22.* Now this runs in as commanding a Style, as that Precept doth, *Matth. 4. Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve* : And as the other Precepts run, *Matth. 19. Thou shalt do no Murder, Thou shalt not commit Adultery, Thou shalt not Steal, Thou shalt not bear false Witness, Honour thy Father and Mother, and, Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy self.* I do not here compare Thing with Thing, a Ceremony with Morality, but one Command with another : And seeing all of them are equally as plain and peremptory on the one hand, as they
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are on the other, it necessarily followeth, that though the *nature* of the *thing* it self doth not, yet the *Command* doth bind us to Obedience in one point, as well as in the rest; the Divine Law being Authoritative, and the Will of God being Obliging in smaller, as well as in the more weighty matters. 2. This Command touching our receiving the Blessed Sacrament, is one of those *new* Laws which are strictly and properly called *Christian* Precepts. Those Everlasting Duties of *Godliness, Righteousness, and Sobriety*, tho' Christ did *Adopt* them, and make them a part of his Law, yet we cannot call them the peculiar Laws of Jesus Christ, because they were enacted and written in Mens hearts from the *Beginning*, and they are common to Christians, and Jews, and Heathens also. But the Law touching this Sacrament is perfectly an *Evangelical* Command; and the Observation thereof is a direct and immediate Profession of our Discipleship, and of our Faith in him, and Love to him, who came to take away the *Mosaical* Rites, whereby Jews were distinguished from other People; and instituted this Solemnity as a *foederal* Rite of his *own*, to be the outward *Mark* and *Cognizance* of a Christian. 3. It is observable, that Christ gave no *plain* and positive

positive Command about this matter, till his *Last Supper*, and just before the time of his *Departure* ; to shew unto us (as *St. Austin* hath somewhere noted) that the Observation of this Solemnity, ought to be had in very *Venerable* and *Lasting* Esteem. Because nothing is more Natural to Men, than to remember and value the Injunctions of a *Dying* Friend, whose *Last* Commands are apt to leave a deep impression upon our Minds, and a continual warmth upon our Affections. Therefore, though our Blessed Saviour, intended all along to Institute this Ordinance, yet he was pleased to *post-pone* the Institution of it, and to reserve it until his *Death*, to put his Church in mind of the vast Importance of this Mystery, that she might set and Devote her self to the Religious Observation of That, which she had Received at the Hands of her *Dying* Lord, as the last Request and Pledge of his sincerest Love. To which we may add in the 4th place, That this Mystery beareth an immediate and near Relation to Christ himself, because it is the great and standing Memorial of his Philanthropy. This Character he himself hath set upon it, that it is the Annunciation of the most Marvellous Love that he could shew unto the World; *This do in remembrance of me.*
Lord!

Lord! were there not a thousand other Arguments of his Love to us, from his Nativity to his Cross? What were all his Sermons, Miracles, Sufferings, but so many Declarations and Monuments of his Goodness, to perpetuate the Memory thereof to all Ages? And yet, we see, he appointed this Ordinance, to be in remembrance of him Chiefly and Principally. Here we do most Solemnly Commemorate the Incomparable Greatness of his Love; we do Publickly own and Declare it; we Proclaim and Publish it before God and Man. So that now by all this put together, the Necessity of Receiving this Sacrament doth plainly appear. For to deny this Necessity, is no other than tacitely to deny, that we are to observe Christ's Laws; to refuse Obedience, is in effect to deny him to be our Lord; it is to cast off our Livery, and to renounce our Profession; to despise this Memorial of his Philanthropy, is to render our selves the most Insensate and Unthankful Wretches, that are as willing to have the Memory of his *Love Dye*, as the *Jews* were to have *Him* Expire upon the Cross.

I am sure, in the Primitive and Purest times of Christianity, Men accounted it a great Act of Religion, and a main Expression of their Affections to the Holy
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Jesus, to Celebrate this Mystery very often; nay, they looked upon this Solemnity, as a necessary part of their constant Worship; without which, the rest of their Services were imperfect and lame. Religion began to be Decrepit and Cold, when the Custom of Receiving a few times in the year, stole into the Church of Christ. For not only in the Apostles time, but for a long time after, Christians were wont to Address themselves to the Lord's Table, every Lord's day, as evidently appears out of *Justin Martyr, St. Cyprian, Jerome, Austin*, and some more of the Ancients; nay, in the Synod at *Antioch*, it was Decreed; *That all such, as at any time met together in the House of God to hear the Scriptures, should be Excommunicated if they stayed not to Receive the Holy Communion.*

Devotion, which now is, as it were, vanish'd into Smoak, in those times shined in a mighty Flame; The Hearts of Men were on fire, and their Zeal was Active and Sprightly in this particular, because they reckoned it a necessary piece of Religion. I confess, the Practice of the Church, is not that which maketh a thing Necessary: Yet 'tis a fair and strong Argument of its Necessity, as being a good Comment upon our Lord's Command. The continued Practice of the Church
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from the Apostles downward, doth shew, that the Wifest and most Learned among them, did look upon themselves greatly obliged by the Law of Christ, to a frequent Participation of this Mystery : Because he said, *Do this, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me*, they concluded themselves bound to do *it often* ; and lest they should not do it often enough, they did it daily.

BUT I will not urge the Necessity of a daily Communion : Yet this we must affirm indefinitely, and in general, that 'tis necessary to *Communicate often* ; so that if nothing be wanting, but a willing and ready Mind, to omit it, is a Sin, a Violation of Christ's Law : And if we think the Primitive Christians did it too often, they are infinitely more to be followed yet, than many now a-days, who either do it not at all, or at most but once or twice a year ; and even then it may be questioned, whether it be not something else besides the Love of Christ, that doth constrain them.

2. THUS much may suffice to be spoken of that Necessity, which is grounded upon our Lord's Command. But besides this, we are to consider, that the neglect of this Sacrament is Evil, not in it self *only*, but in respect of a very Evil Cause, whence this

this shameful Neglect cometh; for that cannot well be supposed to be any other, than some lurking Sin and Wickedness in Mens Hearts, which makes this Sacrament so formidable in their Eyes. Since at this Ordinance, God offereth to Men all the Mercies of the Gospel, and nothing can hinder the conveyance, but an Impenitent and Wicked Heart on the Recipient's part: Hardly would any Man refuse so great Salvation, did not his Conscience tell him, that by Reason of his Love of Sin, he may take Poyson into his Mouth, instead of the Bread of Life. It must needs be, that the great Contempt of this Sacrament is caused, mostly by some root of Bitterness that is in Men's Breasts, which renders the Cup of Blessing very unfavoury and loathsome unto them. The World generally is Evil, and many Love to be so, and for that Reason they dare not come to the Lord's Table. How else comes it to pass, that they croud many times into the Church in Throngs and Multitudes to Prayer, and especially with itching Ears after a Sermon; when yet we see a very slender appearance (especially in some places) at the Sacrament? Certainly we must conclude (or mistrust at least) that People are *Conscious* to themselves, of many Vices which they are fond of, and willingly allow

low and indulge themselves in ; and rather than they will forsake *those* Vices, they forbear this Ordinance, because they cannot live Wickedly, and Participate too, without Eating and Drinking their own Damnation. And is not this a most horrible Crime, to value a few paltry Lusts, above the Body and Blood of Christ ? And to prefer some Sensual and Bruitish Enjoyments, before those Admirable and Astonishing Blessings which are tendred at the Lord's Table ? It was the Sin of the *Jews*, and that which greatly kindled the Anger of the Lord against them, that they slighted the *Manna* (which *David* called *the Food of Angels*) and lusted after the *Fleshpots of Egypt*, the *Cucumbers*, the *Melons*, the *Leeks*, the *Onions*, and the *Garlick*, Num. 11. Much more will it be lookt upon as an intolerable Crime in us, if we make light of the greatest Blessings that Heav'n can bestow (as, the Comforts of the Holy Spirit, the Fellowship of Christ, the Pardon of our Sins, the Peace of our Consciences, an Assurance of a Glorious Immortality, and whatsoever is the Felicity of Blessed Souls ; I say if we slight and reject all these) out of favour to our Sensitive Appetites, that we may still pursue the Unprofitable Works of Darkness, and Enjoy the Pleasures of Sin, which
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are both Beastly in their Nature, and very short for their continuance. As *Maximus Tyrus* (an Heathen Philosopher) argued, *Ser. 20.*
Who is so Mad, so Bewitched, so Byassed by his Affections, that for the love of small and Transitory Pleasures, of uncertain Enjoyments, of doubtful Hopes, and questionable Prosperities, would not change his Life for a Better, and betake himself to that which is Solid and Unquestionable Happiness? Yet of such corrupt and abject Spirits are they, who neither Love nor dare to partake of this Covenant Feast; Men of such Debaucht Minds and Impure Consciences, that they prize the most sordid Considerations, above the Love of God, and a Blessed Eternity; like unclean Swine, that contemn the sweetest Repose in comparison of a Dunghill, and a Bed of Mire. Were not Men Earthly, and Sensual, every one wou'd strive to be a Companion at the Altar. 'Tis a Polluted Heart that hindreth Men's approaches; because they that are Wicked, will be Wicked still; and that is a great Reason, why the Neglect of this Sacrament is Sinful, forasmuch as it proceedeth from a sinful Cause, an Evil and a Rotten Heart.

3. I Heartily wish, that all Persons who are concern'd, would seriously consider these things; and be so Provident too, as to look upon the sad Consequence of

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this Neglect, and see what an immediate and irreparable Injury they are like to do to their own Souls by it; which is the Third and last Consideration. For the words of Christ are plain, *Joh. 6. Except ye Eat the Flesh of the Son of man, and drink his Blood, ye have no life in you.* This place of Scrip-

(a) *Illud in primis animadvertendum occurrit, quoties apud veteres agitur de hoc Sacramento, verba Domini nostri quæ Joan. cap. 6. referuntur, caro mea verè est cibus, & sanguis meus verè est potus: Panis quem ego dabo, caro mea est: Et nisi ederitis carnem filii hominis, &c. ad hoc Sacramentum omnes applicant. — Nec audiendi sunt, qui tanta nube testium refragante, negant illud caput Joannis huc referendum. Diallacticon, Edit. Londin. 1688. p. 15. 9. v.*

ture all the Ancients do with one (a) consent and mouth apply to this Blessed Sacrament; and St. *Austin* himself urged it to prove the necessity even of Infant Communion, which was then a Custom in the Church. That indeed was an Error, that proceeded from the abundant Piety of those times; and the Reason upon which that Custom

was grounded, was not strong enough; because we cannot suppose (whatever St. *Austin* did imagine) that when Christ spake those words, he intended that even those should Communicate who were not capable of *Preparation*, and consequently could not eat his Flesh, nor drink his Blood after a *due manner*. However, it seems most manifest, that the words do refer to this Sacrament; in a *secondary sense* and construction. *Primarily* they mean the eating
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of Christ's *Spiritual* Flesh, and the drinking of his *Spiritual* Blood, and that after a *Spiritual manner*; and this a man may do, though he cannot come to the Sacrament. All Divines do affirm, that Christ may be received Spiritually, when he is not received Sacramentally; meaning, that we may receive vital influences from him (which are his *Spiritual Body*) though we do not communicate of the Sacred Elements; and I doubt not but that Children, and young Members of the Church do so. But this is no Encouragement for any *Adult* Persons, who are not under any *Incapacity*, this is no encouragement to such, to despise or neglect this Ordinance; for to such as these, the Receiving of the Sacramental Bread and Wine is the ordinary Means of Receiving Christ; without using these Means, they cannot have any Reasonable *Assurance* of so great a Blessing, nor such solid grounds as others have for their Hopes of Salvation.

PEOPLE may build their Hopes of Salvation upon Faith and Repentance, and the like: and the truth is, these are the Conditions of our Everlasting Peace. But yet there are several things which well deserve to be considered. 1. That the Promise of Salvation upon Faith and Repentance doth suppose, that Men are in the Communion

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of the Church, and that they express and shew that Communion, by a Regular Use of this and all other Religious Ordinances; for every one is obliged to *do This*, as well as to Believe and Reform his life. 2. That Man's Faith and Repentance is very much to be suspected, who Refuseth to *eat of this Bread, and to drink of this Cup*. For how can the Truth of his Faith appear to himself, that doth not own and confess Christ's Authority over him, by his Subjection to it in this particular? Or, if he believeth this Ordinance to be Necessary, and *himself* to be obliged to the Observance of it, then how can the sincerity of his *Repentance* appear, when he continues in That which he must acknowledge to be a sin? Obedience to the Evangelical Commands is the *only* thing that *Tries* a man, and shews him to be what he really is; and he hardly deserves the Name of a Christian, that declines a Duty which is so easie, so comfortable, so advantageous, to every one that is a Penitent indeed. Suppose such a man lay upon his sick Bed, with a troubled Conscience, and the terrours of Death about him, I would fain know, how he could satisfie himself, that he is a Convert in Truth and Reality, seeing he hath lived in a continual Breach and Defiance of Christ's Law? 3. But suppose his Faith
and

and Repentance be such as is required, yet still 'tis Necessary for him to Receive the Holy Communion, because 'tis needful for him to have the *Seal* of that Righteousness which he hath by Faith. We know that *Abraham Believed*, and found favour with God *before* he was Circumcised; and yet by Circumcision he was *Assured* of God's favour. In like manner, suppose a *Believer* to be forgiven *before* he comes to the Lord's Table, yet he is *Assured* of his forgiveness by coming to it; and 'tis necessary for People ever to take that course which is most for their *Safety* and *Satisfaction*. Every man is apt to think so in *Civil* Contracts, so that though a Deed be drawn, and agreed to, yet they think themselves not sure enough, 'till the Wax and the Seal be added. And truly, if *the Children of Light* were as wise in their Generation, as *the Children of this World* are in their kind of Wisdom, they would think every thing Necessary, that helpeth to give them the more and more *Assurance*. Now this blessed Ordinance hath such an Effect and Tendency; so that let a Penitent's condition be never so good, an honest-hearted Communicant's is much *better*; his Confidence is better grounded; his Hopes are built upon a surer basis; and the Comforts of his heart must be stronger, and the

Peace of his Conscience must be greater, and his Condition must needs be every way much safer, than *His* can be, who from time to time *Neglecteth so great Salvation*. For, in the *Fourth* place, It is upon the due Use of God's Ordinances, that he entitleth us to Eternal Life. Though he *be loving unto every man*, and is ready to pardon every true Penitent, yet hath he set us our way, to obtain our pardon; he hath directed a method and course, in order to our Salvation; and men must observe that method, and take that course, if they will be happy. 'Tis not Peoples Fancies that can save them; nor must they think to Capitulate with Almighty God; or to prescribe *Him* Conditions; but with all heartiness and readiness observe those Conditions which he hath prescribed *Us*. Now this is God's Method, to bring men to Happiness upon a due Use of *Sacraments*, as well as by other Performances; and we must conclude, that he who requireth those Duties we owe our *Selves* and our *Neighbours*, will also (and much rather) exact that Duty we owe his *Son*. In short, men must go in God's Way, and follow God's Directions, and then depend upon his Goodness and Mercy in so doing. If the Jews in the Wilderness intend to be healed of their Wounds,

Wounds, they must look upon the *Brasen Serpent*. Indeed God might have made them whole and sound only by a word from his Mouth; but this was not his way, and therefore there was a necessity for them to make use of the other way that he had ordered them, *Numb. 21*. And so if *Naaman* will be healed of his Leprosie, he must go down into Jordan, and wash seven times. Indeed he muttered at the Prophet, because he did not strike his hand over the place (as he might have done) and he bragged of *Abana and Pharpar*, that they were as good Waters as any Rivers in *Judea* (as perhaps they were) and yet for all this, the Prophet's hand must not heal him, nor will all the Rivers of *Damascus* do him good, but to *Jordan* he must go, or else return a Leper, as he went, *2 Kings 5*. Why thus it is in the present case: God hath promised to pardon all penitent people, and to heal them of their Wounds and Leprosies; but withall, he hath shew'd them whither they must go, and what Means they must make use of; he hath ordered us to *Do This, to Eat of this Bread, and to Drink of this Cup for the remission of sins*; and we are not to begrudge our Duty, but to follow God's Method and Command, and so to expect his Blessing. Men must not

bold off and forbear, because God can pardon them without these Means; or because such great things are spoken of *Faith* and *Repentance*; they must not let go Certainties, and trust to Possibilities; nor slight any Ordinance, as if it were unnecessary, upon a Presumption that God's Mercy and Power is All-sufficient. No, they must shew their Obedience; and have recourse to those Means which God hath Appointed: And this is one, and a principal one; viz. the Receiving of this Blessed Sacrament.

CHAP. II.

Several Excuses Considered.

WHAT hath been thus delivered, will I hope prevail with those, who will be Wise for themselves ; who study to be *blameless and harmless, the Sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse Generation.*

BUT it is a most difficult Matter to Perswade, especially to Actions that are of a Divine and Spiritual Nature. Though Interest be commonly the most powerful Rhetorick in the World, and Mens greatest Interest is concern'd in this Case, yet because they do not discern with their Eyes, either the Advantages that are Received by a Worthy Use, or the Losses that are sustain'd by an unworthy Contempt of this Ordinance ; such is the Folly and Stupidity of many People, that any pretence almost serveth as an Excuse and Plea (sufficient, as they think) to keep them from the *Lord's Table*. That Great Person, *Luke 14.* that made a costly Supper, and Invited many Guests, received very rude Returns ; when they presently pretended,
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one, that he had bought a Farm ; another, that he went to make Tryal of his Oxen ; a third, that he had Married a Wife, and therefore could not by any means come. 'Tis called a Parable, but if you apply it to the Case in hand, it is a plain History of the Improvidence and Unthankfulness of those, who refuse to come to the Lord's Supper, and would fain come off handsomely, if they could, with several Excuses, that something or other doth still hinder them from closing with the Invitation. Therefore my *next* Business must be to shew, how incompetent and trifling Mens Excuses are ; and I must do this the *rather*, because the shameful neglect which some are Guilty of, is very Mischievous and Scandalous to others ; so that they both Judge themselves Unworthy of Eternal Life, and (as much as in them lyeth) by their bad Example, do help to draw many more into the same Condemnation ; and further the hurt of divers precious Souls, for whom the Saviour of the whole World was content and desirous to Dye.

IN the Prosecution of this Matter, there are several sorts of People, I am to speak to. 1. Such as *Indulge* themselves in a course of Life, that is unbecoming and inconsistent with Christianity ; and therefore are very backward and *unwilling* to
come

come to the Holy Communion. 2. Such as live Honestly and Fairly before Men, but yet are such Drudges to the World, and so intent upon making Provision for their Families, that their whole time is laid out upon Secular Affairs, and they have none left them (as they say) for the business of Preparation; and therefore pretend, they have no *Leisure* to come. 3. Such as are willing (and perhaps desirous) to Communicate, and confess they have time enough to fit themselves by Prayer, Fasting, and Repentance, but yet what out of a Sense of their manifold Failings, and what out of an apprehension of the greatness of the Mystery, and what out of a mistrust of themselves for the *future*, conceive themselves to be Unworthy and Unfit, and therefore are *affraid* to come.

1. NOW, as for those in the first place, who make no Conscience of their ways, but live without having a due regard to the Laws of Religion, I must premise, that though it be a wonder, that any who have Learned Christ (who have heard of his Sufferings, of his Laws, and of his Threats) should presume in spite of all to live after this rate, yet it is no wonder that they who do live so, should be backward and unwilling to Receive this Sacrament.

ment. It would be very dangerous for them indeed to receive it, because *S. Paul* hath declared, that he who eateth and drinketh Unworthily, eateth and drinketh Judgment to himself; and such Men as I now speak of, are no more Worthy to eat and drink at the Lord's Table, than Swine are fit to live of the Altar. To such, the Holy Sacrament is a dreadful thing indeed, as long as they continue in an Evil Course: They do in a manner drink down Death with the Wine, and swallow the Bread and the Devil together. Therefore as long as they are in Love with Sin, and Obey it in the Lusts thereof, and yield their Members as Instruments of Unrighteousness, they must by all means forbear coming to this Ordinance.

BUT then they must observe, that this forbearing or refraining upon the consideration of an Evil Conscience, will be in no wise excusable in the Great and Terrible day of God; and if any Man be so Vain and Foolish as to think so, I would offer these following things to his most serious Consideration. 1. That by parity of Reason, he may neglect every *other* Divine Ordinance, as well as *this*; for there is none, but what will rise up in Judgment against him, unless he Repent, and Answer

swer the great Ends of its Institution. *Unto the Wicked, God saith, why dost thou Preach my Law, and takest my Covenant into thy mouth, seeing thou hatest to be Reformed? Ps. 50. 16, 17.* In like manner, why do such Men call upon God's Name, or please themselves, that they hear his word? Nay, why indeed do they profess themselves Christians, as long as they hate to be Reformed? For the Displeasure of God is provoked throughout, and God is their Enemy, and they are His, as long as they thus continue in Sin. For all that such Men do, is Leavened with Hypocrisie; and no Monster is so hateful to God and Man, as an Hypocrite. He that Prayeth with his Mouth, and hath Villany in his Heart, doth in a manner spit in God's Face. He that Heareth the Divine Oracles with an Uncircumcised Ear, doth but make a Mockery of Religion: And he that owneth himself a Disciple of Christ, and at the same time is a Son of *Belial*, infinitely affronteth the Son of God, by making him a Friend to Immorality and Wickedness. 'Tis an *Honest* and Upright Heart that rendreth all our Services acceptable; and where that is wanting, the Sinner may as well forbear every Exterieur Profession of Religion; as go from the Sacrament; there is the same Reason for both, because

Several Excuses considered.

because he injureth himself, and draweth a Curse and Judgment upon his Head in other Instances, as well as by eating and drinking Unworthily. 2. To refuse the Communion, is so far from *Extenuating*, that it aggravates the Crimes of an Evil Wretch; because he thereby addeth one Sin to another; and this is the plain Language of his Heart; I have broken the rest of God's Commandments, and therefore I will go on and break this too. Now I would beseech such to consider, whether this doth not tend to their greater *Condemnation*, instead of amounting to a just Excuse. For a Man to shed his Neighbour's Blood, and then to plead that he had Malice in his Heart, is the ready way not to lessen, but to heighten his Offence; and so, for a Man to trample under foot the Blood of Christ (as they in some Sense do, that slight and vilifie this Ordinance) and then to pretend in his excuse, that he was an Impenitent Sinner, is to be Guilty in some measure, of the Sin of the *Jews*, when they Crucified the Saviour of the World, because he upbraided them with their Incurribleness. Were Men allowed to come to the Sacrament with their Impieties about them, we should have Communicants enough; but because this Holy Rite is an Adversary to their Lusts, and is intended

intended to bring Men under the Discipline of the New Law ; Therefore such as are Wicked, and resolve to be so, draw back, and keep themselves off at a great distance from it, lest they should be put to the trouble of Repenting; and then they make that their *Apology*, which in Truth is their *Crime*, viz; that they are in a very ill State. A thing, which, instead of being any tolerable Plea, is a most inexcusable Pretence ; Because, 3^{dly}, it is a Brutish and Unreasonable Contempt of that, which is a certain Remedy (if duly used) against the greatest Evil ; and for that very Reason, do Licentious Men reject it, because it is a Remedy. Now who would pity a Man, that will not go to the Fire because he is ready to starve with Cold, or that refuse to eat for that very Reason, because he is ready to starve with Hunger ? Why, such is the contumacious Folly of those, who contemn God's Pardon at the Sacrament, because they need it ; and refuse to be cleansed by the Fountain of Life, because they are Filthy ; and reject the means of Recovery, because they are in a State of Death. In this case, every Refractory Person pleadeth his Disease, to excuse his Unwillingness to accept of Help : Such an unpardonable Act of Stubbornness ; as if a
Man

Man should say, he is in extremity of Sickness, and therefore he will not make use of a Physician. 'Tis true, most do pretend, that it is not out of Contempt, but out of Reverence, that they dare not approach to the Holy Table; they have a dread upon them, and are *afraid* (as they say) of incurring God's Displeasure, and of Damning their own Souls, by receiving Unworthily. But then I would intreat them to ask their Consciences, why and how it comes about, that they are not afraid to *Sin*? And why they are not afraid to Transgress other Divine Laws, as well as to Violate this? Are Men so Foolish, as to think, that there is only one Path which leadeth to Hell? and that nothing will bring them to Perdition, but Unworthy Receiving? Or that they may Sin safely, as long as they Sin, and do not Eat? There is every whit as much danger by an Evil Course of Life, as by undue Participation; and a Man may drink his own *Damnation* at a *Tavern*, or in his own House, as well as at the Lord's Table; so that when he dreadeth to do that, which he is commanded to do often, he should examine the Reason, why he dreads not that which he is required never to do.

4 It is not the staying from the Sacrament that will serve an Ill Man's turn;

turn ; it is an addition to his Guilt, but no diminution of his Wickedness ; and whether he Communicate or forbear, his Case is very bad, till he makes his Peace with God, by a sincere Repentance, and Reformation of his Life. Into such a wretched strait and Snare, do Ungodly and Irreligious Courses draw Men, that whether they Receive the Sacrament or no, they are Miserable ; they Perish without the Holy Food, and they Perish by Eating it too ; so that they have only this one way left them to secure them from final Ruine, *viz.* to Repent them seriously of all their Wickedness, and so to Eat of this Bread, and to Drink of this Cup. What (say they) would you have us be Damned, by Receiving the Sacrament, when we are not in a fit Condition for it ? No ; but we would have you fit your selves, and then Receive : We would have you neglect neither, but do both ; because your Unfitness is no Excuse or Bar against your Duty, by Reason that your Unfitness is wilful ; and your failure in one instance, cannot excuse, but must needs aggravate your failure in another. He that Eateth Unworthily, is Guilty in Eating, because he *Profaneth* Christ's Body : And he that Eateth not at all, is Guilty in not Eating, because he *Despiseth* Christ's

Body. And thus much of those that neglect the Communion through an Evil Conscience.

2. THERE is another sort of Men that are Guilty of the same Crime, but upon different Reasons (at least they pretend so) such as pass for Fair and Just Men, but yet are so intangled with the Cares of the World, that they excuse their absence from the Sacrament, by pleading that they want time: As if they Lived in some strange and unknown Country, where there are not any hours in the day.

NOW as to Matter of *Fact*, there is no question, but that Secular Concernments do hinder many from this and other Offices of Religion; upon which account, it is the prime Duty of a Christian to Dye unto the World; and so much Christ intimated, when dividing his Benedictions, he Blessed those in the *first* place, who are *Poor in Spirit*, as you find by those Evangelists who have recorded his Sermon on the Mount; and the Reason of it is told us, *Matth. 6. 24.* because we cannot serve God and Mammon too: And we see it by every days Experience, that the Love of Greatness and Riches, and the Inordinate Cares of this Life, are apt to outweigh all other Considerations. But then if we speak *de Jure*, of the Reasonableness

ness and Sufficiency of their Excuses, who time after time refuse the Holy Sacrament, under a pretence, that they have not leisure to Prepare themselves for it; there are many Considerations to be offered, which shew, that this Plea will rather Condemn than Acquit them; for Brevity sake, I shall pitch upon these. 1. That this Plea is very much to be suspected and question'd, whether it be real, or only a Pretext and a Cloak to cover their Disobedience. 2. But suppose, that they are Men of some Ingenuity, who pretend variety or multiplicity of Business, Men that are Honest and Conscientious in their Callings, but yet are carried away with an hurry of Affairs, and are *troubled about many things*, as was said of *Martha*, *Luke 10. 41.* yet they should often call to mind the next words of our Saviour, that *one thing is needful*. It is not necessary to be Rich, but 'tis necessary to be Religious; and Worldly Matters must ever give place to things that are of an Heavenly and Spiritual Nature, when they stand together in Competition. Men were better do, as *Crates* the *Theban* did, part with all their Gold, than be void of that which is true Wisdom: And it is infinitely more desirable for them to be *rid* of those Riches which are a clog unto them, and hinder

them from going to Heaven, than upon their Death-Beds to be troubled with a sad remembrance, that they have been more faithful Drudges to their Families, than Friends and Servants to God. 3. But I hope there are many good People who use the World, yet neither Abuse the World, nor themselves for the World's sake. I am sure, 'tis possible to have our Conversation in Heaven, even while we live upon the Earth; and 'tis no difficult Matter for a Wise Man, to serve God and himself too. Let him follow his Vocation diligently, let him deal Justly, and shew Mercy, and walk Humbly, and Pray Daily, and with a good Conscience; and then in doing the works of his Calling, he doth in some measure work out his Salvation too. For he Obeyeth God in labouring with his hands, and in working that which is good; and so throughout the week, he doth in some sort and degree fit and prepare himself against the Sacrament on the Lord's day. I deny not, but Men should pare off some portion of the six days, and Consecrate it to a more solemn and strict Preparation. Yet this I say, that the following of our Secular Business with Sobriety and Honestly, is far from being a just hinderance, to keep him from attending on this Ordinance. For let a Man
but

but lead an Holy Life (and that he may do in any Calling that is but lawful) and the less time will be required for self Examination. Let him but carry always the true Fear of God in his Heart, and the less fearful will he be of drawing near unto God in the Church, because he never departeth from him, though he be at home. An upright Conversation is a continual Prayer, and a constant kind of Preparation; and so Men may in some measure fit themselves to be Communicants, even in their Shops and Warehouses. And yet certainly the Business of the day is not so great nor urgent, but that any the most painful Tradesman may find some convenient time, to offer up to God the *Morning and Evening Sacrifice*, both of Praise for the Enjoyment of his Mercies, and of Prayer for the Pardon of his own Sins. Now let him but enter upon his Affairs with Devotion, and manage them with Integrity, and end them and the day with Piety and Repentance for his Failings, and he may be fit to Communicate weekly if he will. And if any Man be such an Enemy to himself, as that he is careless in observing this Method, let him lay the blame not upon the Urgency of his Business, or want of time, but (where it should be laid) upon

his want of true Zeal, and a right Christian Spirit. Yet it is not to be denied, but Men may have some more extraordinary Troubles come in upon them at some times, than at others. Such is the course of this world, that there are floods as well as ebbings of Business in every Employment. However, 4^{thly}, This is to be Considered, that the most important Matters are rarely so instant and pressing, but Men can pick out some lucid intervals, and steal away from their Cares, either to some by-Concernments that are not so cumbersome, or to Recreations that are for their Refreshment. And how can Men pretend, that they have not time to fit themselves for the Sacrament, when they may dispatch the work in a less space, than that amounts to, which many times is vainly, and sometimes sinfully employed? If such Men were sure to purchase an Estate, by the Prayers and Penances of a week, I am apt to think, none of them would pretend that they wanted time. Or if an Office or Place were in danger to be lost, or a considerable sum of Money like to be forfeited, unless the Sacrament be Receiv'd by such a day, 'tis likely that whatever Mens Business or Concernments are, they would be sure to keep their sides free from the lash of the Law. And what's

what's the Reason, that Penal Statutes are so carefully observed, while at other times the Commands of Christ are so easily past over, but that Men generally have not that tender regard of their Souls, as they have of their Purfes, and of their Secular Interest?

3. BUT besides these, there is a third sort of Persons, whose Excuses are a little to be Considered too; many Serious, Religious, and Devout Christians, I doubt not, who have both Hearts to come to the Communion, and time enough for Preparation, but yet are troubled with Scruples and Fears, lest they should not come prepared sufficiently, notwithstanding their Pious Endeavours; and so rather chuse to refrain, though it be with much reluctancy and regret. These Fears and Scruples, I now speak of, do mostly, if not altogether, proceed from wrong Notions and Apprehensions concerning this Mystery. Because they are told, that before they Receive, they must Examine themselves, whether they be in a State of Grace; and that after they have Received, they must be careful continually to persevere in that State; hence it cometh to pass, that they are very mistrustful of themselves, and very fearful of the worst. Perhaps the remembrance of some Sin

that is past, doth yet run in their minds, though they be truly Penitent for it ; and withal the Sense of their Natural Weakness makes them doubtful for the future, lest they should Transgress again notwithstanding their watchfulness; and the apprehensions of what is past, and of what may follow, disquiets their Consciences; and thinking to Err on the Right Hand, they resolve to keep their feet from the Table of the Lord, lest they should take a step towards the brink of Destruction.

NOW, to rectifie the mistakes of these, it is to be observed, That no more is required of any (in point of Practice) for the due Receiving of this Sacrament, than what is required of us all by the Tenor of the New Covenant; for here we do renew our Covenant with God, and engage our selves afresh, but upon the *former* Terms that were undertaken at our Baptism: So that what that Covenant doth contain, that we are bound now to make good. Now the Conditions of the New Covenant are these in short, *viz.* Faith in Christ, accompanied with Repentance from all dead Works. And if Men bewail their Sins heartily, and resolve to be circumspect for the time to come, not allowing themselves in any thing that is Evil, but forsaking all sinful

ful Habits, and watching against all sinful Acts ; and if they persevere in this course, studying to serve God according to the best of their Power and Knowledge ; there is no doubt, but they shall find acceptance with God. And these are the things which we profess at the Sacrament, that we do and will do : 1. We profess our selves Penitents for all that is past and gone. 2. We undertake to live Godly Lives for the future ; meaning as near as we can, by the help of God's Grace, considering the Imperfections of our Depraved Nature. And if we do not Profess and undertake these things at other times, we are not so much indeed as Christians ; and if we do them sincerely now, we are fit to be Communicants. So that, I confess, I do not see, what Reason any Conscientious and Good Hearted Man hath to be afraid of this Ordinance ; rather it should be his Comfort and Joy, that he hath liberty to use it ; because it is the Seal of those Promises of Pardon and Mercy, which God hath made to every broken Heart. No scruples therefore are sufficient to beat off any Pious and Penitent Souls ; for if Men do not Repent and Reform, they are not the Disciples of Christ ; and if they do, they are in a good Condition to be
Guests

Guests at Christ's Table. I have more to say concerning this matter, when I come to treat of the Nature of that Preparation which is necessary; but this I hope is sufficient for the present.

C H A P. III.

Of the Necessity of Preparation.

THE Necessity of Receiving the Holy Sacrament being thus proved, it is time now to consider those *Dispositions* and *Preparations* wherewith all People are bound to come to the Lord's Table, that they may Eat and Drink after a worthy manner.

AND here, two things are to be enquired into, for the full satisfaction of Mens Consciences. 1. First, concerning the *Necessity* of Preparing our selves before hand; how that doth *appear*. 2. Secondly, concerning the *Nature* of this Preparation; wherein that doth *consist*.

I. F I R S T, touching the *Necessity* of Preparing our selves, before we presume to eat of this Bread and to drink of this Cup. It is observable, That our Blessed Saviour himself

himself gave his Disciples no particular Instructions about this matter, when he Instituted this Solemnity. He commanded them indeed *to do this*, and to Celebrate this Mystery *in Remembrance* of him; but we do not Read of any express Directions he gave, touching *Preparation* thereunto. However, that no Man may be emboldened to use this Ordinance, after an Irreligious or rash manner, the Necessity of Preparing our selves, will evidently appear from these following Considerations.

1. From the consideration of that *Analogy* which this Mystery bears to those Ancient *Sacrefical Feasts*, that were Celebrated by all Mankind. These I have treated of at large, because the full Knowledge thereof, is very serviceable in helping us, to understand both the Nature of this Feast, and our own *Duty* too in the use of it; which probably might be the Reason of our Lord's Silence in this point: Because it was not so very necessary for him to give particular Instructions in a matter, which was so obvious to all, that Men could easily be led to a Sense of their Duty by those common Notions and Apprehensions, which both *Heathens* and *Jews* had of Banquets of this Nature.

AS for the *Heathen* part of the world, they saw by the Light of Nature, that
Holy

Holy things ought to be used with a great deal of Reverence, and by Men of Holiness and Purity. And for this Reason their constant Custom was, before they went to their Sacrificial Banquets, to Prepare themselves with many previous Rites and Ceremonies, supposing, that thereby they did Sanctifie and fit themselves for the Service of their Deities. Thus the Pagan

Farinam fermento imbutam attingere, ei fas non est. Aul. Gell. de Flam. Dial. Noct. Attic. lib. 10. c. 15. Of these Preparatory Rites, See Scuckius in Sacror. & Sacrificior. descrip. pag. 79. &c. Gyrard. Hist. Dierum Syntag. 17. p. 427. Natal. Mythol. lib. 1. c. 9. & 14. Alex. ab Alex. Gen. dier. 1. 4. c. 17.

Priests were wont to forbear the very touching of any Bread that was Leavened, lest they should be polluted. They used many sorts of Lustrations and Washings, cleansing as well their Cloathes, as their Bodies (especially their Hands) with the Purest

Water, that was appropriated to that purpose. They abstained for many days before hand from Eating of Flesh, and from Drinking of Wine. They refrained from the Nuptial Bed, and from all Carnal Pleasures, using many Artificial Methods, to subdue and Mortifie their Sensual Appetites. And when the time for Sacrificing was come, they arrayed themselves with clean and spotless Garments, which they called their *Holy and Religious Dress*. Nor was this the Practice of the
Priests

Priests only. For all the *People* that were to Eat and Drink before their Deities, were required also to *Prepare* and *Purifie* themselves thoroughly after their way; believing that the outward Sanctifications of their Bodies, did serve to Sanctifie and Cleanse their very Souls and Spirits. Thus they were wont to wash themselves often; to give themselves to Fastings and much Abstinence; to deny themselves those Fleshly Satisfactions, which at other times were lawful. Their Custom too, was to make solemn acknowledgments of the Sins of their Lives, Praying to their Gods not to take Vengeance upon them. If any Man had his Hands Defiled with Blood, or was polluted and stained with any gross Wickedness, he was not to come to the Altar: And when their Services were beginning, Proclamation was made, *τίς τίνδε, who are here?* Whereunto they Answered, πολλοί, καγαθοί, that is, *Many and Good Men*: And if any was found there, that was known to be otherwise, or to be in a State of *Guilt*, he was turned out of the Company of the Rest; the very Heathens believing, *that none were fit to meddle with things Sacrificed, but such as were Upright in Mind, and void of an Evil Conscience.*

See the Authors above mentioned.

In Sacrificiis rite celebrandis majorem nullam ceremoniam fuisse videmus, quam nihil sibi conscire, bonos ac pios esse. Gyrard. Syntag. 17. pag. 492.

AND

AND as touching the *Jews*, every one knows how strictly they were commanded to *Cleanse* and *Purifie* themselves, according to the Sanctifications of the Law, before they presumed to Eat and Drink before the Holy One of *Israel*; especially at the *Paschal* Supper, in lieu whereof this *Christian* Solemnity is substituted and appointed: No Man was permitted to partake of the Passover, that was not duly Prepared for it by the Rite of *Circumcision*. No Proselyte was suffered to come, that was not first Sanctified and fitted for it, according as the Law directed in that case. None that were in their Uncleaness, or in any respect legally Impure, whether Men or Women, were to be admitted, till they were cleansed from their Pollutions. Nay, not the *People* themselves only, but their very *Houses* also were to be free from all defilements. And hence it was, that some days before the Feast, they purged all manner of *Leaven* out of their *Rooms*; and for fear any ferment should remain in any part of their dwellings, they were wont, the Night before the Passover, to search with a Candle into every hole in their walls, and into every chink and crevise in their Floors. And whatsoever Leaven was found, their Custom was to burn it, using
this

this Form of words, *Let all the Leaven, and every Leavened thing that is with me, whether I have seen or not seen it, whether I have carryed it forth or no, be dissipated and destroyed, and accounted as the dust of the Earth:* By which Solemn way of Imprecation, the Jews did clear themselves of Guilt, and protested their Innocence to the utmost of their Knowledge. And when the Hour was come for the Eating of the Passover, before they sat down, the Feet of the Communicants were washed, as at other Feasts; only it is to be Noted, that at *this Banquet* they washed twice, to shew the *Preeminence*, and great *Dignity* of this Religious Solemnity above the rest.

Buxtorf.
Synag.
cap. 12.

SEEING then this was the general Practice of the Jews and Gentiles both, it abundantly argues it to have been the common Sense of all Mankind, that great and strict Preparations were necessary, before they durst present any Sacrifice unto God, or Feast together upon any parts thereof. And the Correspondence that is between *this*, and other Ancient *Sacrificial Banquets*, is enough to shew how Religious and strict the care of Christians ought to be, in preparing and fitting themselves for so Solemn an Ordinance, before they presume to address themselves to the
Holy

Holy Table, to Feast together upon a Sacrificed Saviour, the Spotless *Lamb of God* which taketh away the Sins of the world. For this is a Feast of the Highest and Noblest Nature, that ever was. We have an *Altar*, whereof, neither *Heathen* nor *Jew*, hath any right to Eat: And we have a Sacrifice to partake of, which is infinitely better than thousand of Rams, and ten thousands of Rivers of Oyl. For here we feed on the Son of God himself, Christ our Passover, that was Sacrificed for us, whose *Flesh is Meat indeed*, and whose *Blood is Drink indeed*. Here we enter into a close *Alliance* with the Holy One of *Israel*; we are *One* with Christ by his *Spiritual Body* that is given us; we Receive the Seals of our *Adoption*, and are possesst of a Title to the Kingdom of Heaven. And this being the Highest Mystery of our Religion, we must not dare to Celebrate it after a rude and rash manner; but come unto it after great Preparations, having first searched into our State, and measured our selves by the line of the Gospel, according to which we shall be Judged in the Great and Terrible day; and so presenting our selves before the Holy Table, with clean Hands and a Pure Heart, and with Souls full of God, and in Love with all manner of Piety and Goodness. Those
Ceremonial

Ceremonial Rites, which were made necessary Preparatives in order to a due Celebration of the *Paschal* Feast, were of *Mystical* signification; pointing out that *inward* and *substantial* Purity, which is now required of those that enter into Covenant with God, by taking the Pledges of his Covenant into their Mouths. They must Circumcise their *Hearts*, as the *Jews* did their *Flesh*: They should Examine their *Souls* and *Consciences*, as the *Jews* did their *Chambers*: They should keep the Feast, not with the *Old Leaven*, neither with the *Leaven of Malice and Wickedness*, but with the *Unleavened Bread of Sincerity and Truth*: They should purge and Sanctify their *Affections*, as *Jews* and *Pagans* were wont to wash their *Hands* and *Feet*; and so compass the Altar of God, having first cleansed their Bodies and Spirits in Innocence. These are the *Moral Duties*, which those Ritual Ordinances did signify, and which were the substance and *inside* of them. And therefore perhaps it was, that our Saviour delivered no particular Rules (that we Read of) about this matter; because those Purifications which were every where in the world, used in order to a right Participation of Sacrificial Feasts, did plainly Indicate to all Christians what their Duty

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was;

was; and did speak enough to inform us all, that we ought to be Religiously *Qualified, Prepared, and Disposed*, before we approach unto his Table; and thus much he seems to have *intimated*, when he *washed his Disciples feet with his own hands*, before he proceeded to the Institution of this Solemnity.

2. NOW though this be sufficient to shew the Necessity of due Preparation in order to a Worthy Receiving of this Sacrament, yet for further proof hereof, we are, in the next place, to add these words of *S. Paul, 1 Cor. 11. 28. Let a Man Examine himself, and so let him eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup.* There is not a Text in all the Scriptures, but this only, which gives us a *Command and Direction* concerning this thing. But this is full and comprehensive, if we understand it in its just Latitude, *δοκιμαζέτω* is the word in the Original Greek, and it signifies two things. 1. First, it imports *searching and trying*; every one should look into his Breast, and see how his Heart stands affected and disposed, before he goes to the Holy Communion. Seldom is a Man so well acquainted with himself, but that he hath often Reason (especially before he draws near to God, to Contract for an Eternity) to ask his Conscience seriously,

Is

Is there not any Wickedness in me? The great Sages of Old thought it one of the most difficult matters, for a Man to know himself thoroughly. For such is the Pravity of our Nature, that we are commonly very loath to search into our Bosoms, for fear we should discover some ugly Monster there, like ill Husbands that are afraid to look over the Account of their Debts, lest their minds should be disquieted at the sight of them. And when we do take our selves to task, such is our *Partiality*, that for the most part we pass too *favourable* Judgment in our own Case, and are apt to think our selves Clean, though our Defilements are more than *the spots of the Sun*. Considering therefore that at this Sacrament we present our selves, before that Great God who is the *searcher of the Reins*, and the *Rewarder of all Evil*, we are very highly concern'd to rip open our Hearts before hand, and to Examine every Angle of our Souls, lest we receive the same Answer, which that rude Guest received, who came Unprepared to the Wedding Feast, *Friend, how camest thou hither, Matth. 22.* Indeed it would be needful for us, were we not Christians, but Men only, to cast our Eyes back upon our ways every Night, and see how we have pass'd over the Hours

of the day, before we climb up into our Beds: For this was the grave Advice even of a Pagan Philosopher, That e're we

suffer our Eyes to Sleep, we should thrice run over the works of the day past, and ask our selves, Where we have been? What we have

Mind' ὅταν μαλακῶσιν
ἐπ' αἰμασὶ περιστρέψας πέ-
τον ἡμετέραν ἔργων τε καὶ ἡ-
συχίας ἐπαθεῖν ὥς περὶ βίαν;
πὶ δ' ἐρεῖα, Ὡς Pythag. μὲν. in
Χρυσ. ὅτι.

done? What necessary thing we have omitted? So reckoning up the several passages of our Life from the first dawning of the Light, as saith Pythagoras. For as Hierocles hath rightly Noted, This course will serve very much, either to Crown us with Joy, for what we have done well; or to increase our Repentance for whatever hath been done amiss. But never should we be more careful of this, than when we resolve to make our Approaches to the Table of the Lord; then it is most necessary to lay aside some portion of time, to enquire into our Condition with all diligence, to peruse the Register of our Actions, and to call our selves to an account even for our words and thoughts. For hardly doth any Man walk so in this world, but that he contracteth some filth daily; some Defilements or other are apt to stick to his Heels. Even the Conscientious manningement of our common Affairs, and our Lawful Callings, though it be

Hierocl.
in Pythag.
pag. 210.

be in its kind a good Preservative against Sin, yet 'tis apt to steal away our Hearts from God, and to draw us sometimes into a Snare. And for this Reason, the most Righteous Man among us hath need to sequester some hours from other Employments, and to enquire whether he be fit to come to the Supper of the Lamb.

2. BUT then, Secondly, we must note, that this Examination is not required for it self, but as a *Relative Duty*, that is, an Excellent *Means* to a farther end; that a Man may be able after Tryal and search, to make right *Judgment* of himself; and may be provoked and perswaded to *Correct* the several *Errata* of his Life. And this is the full meaning of St. Paul in that place; where he doth chide the *Corinthians* for their shameful Miscarriages in the Church at the Communion time. For *first of all*, when ye come together in the Church, I hear that there be Divisions among you, saith the Apostle, v. 18. And then, in Eating every one taketh before other his own Supper, and one is Hungry, and another is drunken, v. 21. These were Vile and Scandalous Actions; and when the Apostle Commanded them to *Examine* themselves, his meaning could not be, that he would have them enquire, whether Matter of Fact was not true, or

whether the things laid to their Charge were *not Evil*, for all this was *plain and open*, and *manifest* already, and needed *Censure* rather than *Examination*. But when he Commanded them to *Examine*, his purpose was, that they should *Reform* themselves, and for the future take care; not to meddle with that Sacred Mystery, till upon searching of their Hearts, they could *approve* themselves to God and the Church, and to their own Consciences, and should find themselves fit to be Communicants. *Examination* here, is as much as *Approbation*; and in this Sense, we find the word used as well in Prophane as in Sacred Writers. The Men of *Sparta* were wont to be Tryed, whether they had well observed the Laws of *Lycurgus*; and such of them as were found to have done so, were called δουμσθέντες, *approved Persons*, Men that were fit and well Qualified to be Citizens. And according to this Sense we are to understand that of *St. Paul*, *1 Tim. 3. 10.* where speaking of such as were to be chosen Deacons, he said, δουμσθέντες ὡς ἂν, *let them be first approved of*; let them be Esteemed as Men that are fit for that Function; ἀνέγκλητοι ὄντες, *persons that are blameless in every respect*. And speaking of himself being appointed to be an Apostle, he useth the same Expression,

1 Thess.

1 *Thess.* 2. 4. διδομυχομεθα ὑπο τῷ θεῷ,
we were *Approved* of by God, and thought
Meet to be entrusted with the Gospel.
And many more places there are in the
New Testament, where the word signi-
fies, not only Examination, but *Approba-
tion*, or *Liking*; and questionless this chiefly
is the meaning of St. Paul in this place;
Let a Man Examine himself; that is, let
every Man see that he be fit to be a Re-
ceiver, that he be rightly qualified and
disposed, that he be such as the Condi-
tions and Laws of the Gospel require him
to be. His Conscience must not Con-
demn him for any known Sin Unre-
pented of: He must have this Testimony
within himself, that his Heart is sincere:
He must be an Holy Person that makes
use of this Mystery; one that hath led
an Holy Life, or at least, that hath now
Holy Purposes and Vows, that he will *Re-
deem the time* for the future, and yield up
the Members of his Body, and the Fa-
culties of his Soul, as *Instruments of Righ-
teousness and Holiness*. He that hath not
any *Comfortable Confidence*, that he is
thus Religiously and Honestly disposed,
ought not to Communicate of these
Mysteries.

3. FOR in the Third place, to shew you
yet further the Necessity of due Prepara-

ration, the Apostle tells us, 1 Cor. 12. 27. *Whosoever shall Eat this Bread, and Drink this Cup, of the Lord Unworthily, shall be guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord.* And again, v. 29. *He that Eateth and Drinketh Unworthily; Eateth and Drinketh Damnation (or Judgment) to himself, not discerning the Lord's Body.* In which two Verses, the Apostle sets down the Sin and the Punishment of those, who go to the Lord's Table, as the *Corinthians* did, with *Factionous, Irreverent, and Unprepared Hearts.* Their Sin is twofold. 1. *First, they discern not the Lord's Body;* meaning, that they make no difference

Deus erat Sermo, qui domini corpus veluti quemlibet alium cibum indifcrete, negligerenterque sumebant. August. Tract. 62. in Joan. Sic & Hieron. in Loc. & Autor. Librorum de Cardinal. oper. Cypriano ascript. & S. Chrys. in 1 Cor. 11. 29.

between this Supper, and an ordinary Meal; they take the Body of the Lord with the same Indiscretion and Negligence, wherewith they take *Unblessed and Common Food,* not considering the greatness of the things that are Exhibited, nor the Amplitude of the Gift that is here given to every well Prepared Soul. For no less than the Spiritual Body of Christ is tendered by the Elements. And so, Secondly, the Unworthy and Irreverent Communicant sinneth directly, and immediately against the *Body* of his Saviour;
he

he becomes Guilty of his Body and Blood, shewing by his Actions, that he hath a very low and mean regard, of that most Precious and Salutary Offering upon the Cross. Now according to this twofold Sin, the Unworthy Receiver hath a twofold Punishment. 1. First, he *Eateth and Drinketh his own Damnation*, saith St. Paul. As the Devout and Sincere-hearted Communicant Receives the Pledges of a Glorious Immortality, by Receiving the outward Symbols; so doth he that intrudes rudely, take that which is the occasion of his Everlasting Ruine, without true Repentance. The Devil enters in with the Morsel, as he did into *Judas*, not to be cast out, but by Prayer and Fasting, and a strong Repentance. For as the Bodily Presence of Christ in the *Flesh*, was an occasion of Condemnation to those who Received him not then by Faith; so doth his *Mystical* and *Spiritual* Presence here, accidentally turn to the Prejudice of such as Receive him not now in a due manner. Nay, 2^{dly}, such Bold and Presumptuous Persons, do draw a Curse down upon their Heads even in *this* World. *For this Cause*, saith St. Paul, *many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep*. Whence come many lingring Diseases, many sudden Deaths? Why, it is very probable, that
many

many of them are owing to the Irreverent use of this Blessed Sacrament. Certain it is, that as God threatned under the Law, *Exod. 12. 15. to cut off those Souls that should eat Leavened Bread at the Pass-over*; so in the Primitive times of Christianity, many were remarkably visited with Plagues, and sundry kinds of Death (and some People were possesst with the Devil too) by Reason that they came not to this Mystery, well Prepared and Qualified for it, as they ought to have been. I shall say no more upon this Theme, supposing that what hath been delivered now, is sufficient to Convince Men of the Necessity of due Preparation: And I had scarcely said so much, but that it is a thing which lyeth before us in our way, and I could not leap over it with an Honest Conscience. In many other Cases Men need a Bridle, rather than a Spur; but in this Case, a Spur seems to be more necessary than a Bridle; because such is the shameful neglect of this Ordinance, which many are Guilty of, that we should rather use *Protrepticks*, to provoke Men unto their Duty, than *Threats* and *Menaces* to deter them from Receiving. However, that they may not make more-haste than good speed, it behoved me to shew, what *Cautions* they are to take along with

with them, lest they take a step towards their Perdition. *Keep thy foot when thou goest to the House of God; and be more ready to hear, than to give the Sacrifice of Fools,* as the Royal Preacher said, *Eccies. 4. 1.*

Thus having made it appear, that we are strictly *bound* to *Communicate*, and to *Prepare* our selves rightly and duely in order to a Profitable Communion (which was the first thing I was to discourse of upon this point) I shall now go on according to this plain Method, and Treat in the next place of the *Nature* and *Quality* of this Preparation, and shew you wherein that doth consist.

C H A P.

C H A P. IV.

*Of the Nature of Preparation,
in general, and in particular.*

THIS is a Matter of great weight and Consideration ; though a very slight account is made of it by those, whose great care and solicitude seems to be, to whisper their Crimes to the Ear of a Confessor, and to undergo or Promise some trifling Penance ; and if after these little Practices, they have the Absolution of a Priest (who yet perhaps, is equally involved in the Communion of Guilt with his Penitents) they think themselves sufficiently purged from the Conscience of Sin, and to be perfectly Innocent. And this naturally followeth from the Principles of those Doctors, who Teach, that *Confession* and *Penance*, are the necessary Preparatives before the Sacrament ; without making any the least mention of a *Lively Faith* in Christ. And although they speak of the Necessity of *Contrition* (or *Attrition* at least) yet by those words, they understand no more, but a little grief

grief for Sin, with some few purposes at present to amend hereafter; which they think to be sufficient, because, according to their Fancy, the work of the Priest supplies and makes amends for the want of a true and Manly Repentance of the Heart. Now this is so far from being a due Preparation for the Sacrament, that 'tis a Ridiculous and trifling Method, made up of lucrative Arts and absurd Performances; and serveth to Corrupt and Debauch Christianity, and to encourage People in a Wicked and Irreligious course of Life; as any Man may discern, that will but observe, the Natural Consequences thereof.

I. THEREFORE for the Resolution of this point, and for the Satisfaction of Mens Consciences in this particular, we are first to Note, in the general, that Universal Sanctity and Purity of Mind is required of us, in order to a Profitable and Comfortable Communion. It was the Opinion even of a *Pagan*, that such as meddle with things Sacred, ought to be Chaste and Holy, not for a certain number of days only, but throughout their whole Life. And certainly a constant course of Holiness, is the best Prepa-

rative

parative for a due Celebration of this Mystery ; because nothing can be presumed to be so acceptable unto God, as a *Life of Innocence*. Yet if a Man hath *lost* his Innocence, either through the Practice of *Habitual Sin*, or through the Commission of some Unlawful *Acts*; his *Repentance* nevertheless is for Christ's sake accepted of in *lieu* of it, if that Repentance be *Hearty* and *Sincere*.

NOW Repentance cannot be right, unless the Heart be entirely good, so as to be out of Love with every thing that is base and inconsistent with the Laws of Christ's Religion. And therefore a Communicant's mind and purpose must be resolutely fixt upon the Practice of *Universal Christian Piety*. Though some particular Virtues are here more especially to be Exercised, because there are at this time particular *Reasons*, and *special Objects* to Exercise his *Faith*, *Charity*, and the like; yet there ought to be an *Habitual Presence* of other Virtues too; the frame and disposition of our Spirits must be such, as is Answerable to the whole Tenor of the Gospel. *Bonum ex integris, malum ex quolibet defectu*: He cannot be said to be an entire Good Man, nor a right Good Communicant, that has not an entire and Universal Love of Religion, in such a measure.

measure, as by the Mercies of the New Covenant is now accepted of. Each Divine Grace must contribute something to make up our Wedding Apparel; the *covering of Charity*, the *Ornaments of a meek and gentle Spirit*, the *clothing of Humility*, the *sackcloth of Repentance and self-denial*, the long Robe of *Patience and Constancy*, the New Apparel of *Mercy and Forgiveness*. In a word, we ought to be so *Perfect*, as to be *Sincere*, and to *be ready unto every good work*, according to the best of our Knowledge, and to the uttermost of our Power. All Affection and Love to Sin must be cast off; and Mens Hearts must be Devoted to the observation of all the Laws of our Redeemer, as his Spirit shall enable us, by working *in us*, and *with us*, and by *helping our Infirmities*. He that is not thus disposed, cannot Communicate Worthily, and so as to obtain a Blessing. And the Reason is clear, because (as I have shewed at large) this is a *Covenant Feast* under the Gospel, as the Paschal Supper, and other Sacrificial Banquets were under the *Law*. By tasting of this Bread and Wine we enter into Solemn *Engagements* unto God, as the Jews did by Eating of the *Lamb*. As they did by that Holy Rite addict themselves to the Worship of God, and engage their Obedience to him, conformable to those.

those *Laws and Ordinances*, which were Enacted then; even so do we Christians Consecrate our selves by this *Evangelical Solemnity* to the Service of God, and vow Obedience to him, answerable to that way and platform, which he hath laid before us now. This is the meaning of this Mystery; and therefore 'tis called a *Sacrament*, because 'tis like the old *Military Oath*, binding all of us to be *Faithful and True* to the *Captain of our Salvation*. Now this is that which he hath commanded us by the Mouth of his Apostle, that as he who hath called us is *Holy*, so we also should be *Holy* in all manner of Conversation, *1 Pet. 1. 15.* And this we undertake to do, when we Eat and Drink here before the Lord, if we rightly understand what we do. We stipulate and vow to Obey the Will of God in all things; and promise Solemnly to deny all *ungodliness and worldly Lusts*, and in express terms do offer and present unto God our selves, our Souls and Bodies, to be a *holy, reasonable, and lively Sacrifice unto him*. Now unless we really intend what we do *Profess*, and do stedfastly purpose, and diligently endeavour to make all our Promises good, what else can we be supposed to do, but to set forth our own shameful *Hypocrisie*, instead of shewing forth the Lord's Death? Therefore, if

we intend to Receive this *Sacrament* with Profit, and to our Eternal Salvation, we must resolve with our selves to be *upright* and *sincere* in Heart ; to *lay aside all filthiness of Flesh and Spirit, perfecting Holiness in the fear of God* ; to take to our selves *the whole Armour of God*, and to quit and behave our selves *like Men*. We must resolve to serve God all our days with Reverence and Fear, and to make him the Object of our Desires, and the Portion of our Souls ; to be Holy in our Affections, to be Humble in Soul, to be Meek and Peaceable in Spirit, to be Sober and Temperate in our Delights ; to be Contented in all Conditions, and to be Patient under our Crosses, as the Prince of Peace was under *his* : To be Thankful for our Afflictions, to be constant and firm in our Tryals, and to be Charitable in all our Prayers, as he himself was, who Prayed unto his Father at the very last gasp, for the Forgiveness of his Enemies. Men must not be so vain, as to imagine, that they are sufficiently Prepared, if they do but find within themselves some present Raptures, and Liquorish apprehensions of the Love of God ; if they can but breath out some Groans, or dissolve themselves into a shower of Water. No ; the right Preparation of the Heart consisteth in the

entire Love of Virtue, of whatsoever things are *True*, and *Honest*, and *Just*, and *Pure*, and *Lovely*, and of *Good Report*, as the Apostle speaks, *Phil. 4. 8.*

AND thus much may suffice to be spoken briefly, of the *Quality and Nature of due Preparation in general*: It must be an *Universal Rectitude and Holiness of Heart*, an *entire Goodness of Disposition*, a *sincere Love of that Religion*, which is *Pure and Undeſiled*, and ſuch a *Divine frame and bent of Soul*, as utterly *Abhorreth* all that is *Evil and Destructive* of that *Obedience*, which is due both to the *ſiſt and ſecond Table of the Decalogue*.

2. BUT then we muſt Note, in the next place, that as there ought to be this *general and habitual Preparation*, ſo there are ſome *Particular and Special Duties*, which are now to be performed, becauſe (as I ſaid) here are *ſpecial Objects and Reasons* to ſtir us up to the performance of them. Here the Paſſion of Chriſt is repreſented, the Pardon of our Sins is tendered, and the infinite Love of God is Exhibited to us. And accordingly we are to lay hold on Chriſt's Merits with all our Souls, becauſe his Merits are available to ſuch only as do *Believe*: We are truly and earneſtly to *Repent* of our Sins, becauſe Sin was
that

that which Christ Dyed for, and 'tis upon our Repentance that our Pardon is Sealed; and moreover we are to express our entire *Love* to our Brethren, in all its Acts and Offices; because, *if God so Loved us, we ought also to Love one another, 1 Joh. 4. 11.* Hence it is, that Divines commonly Prescribe *Faith, and Repentance, and Charity*, as most necessary Preparatives in order to a worthy Receiving; not as if *other Virtues* were to be excluded, but because *these* are *specially* to be Exercised, so much as this great Solemnity doth afford us Special and Eminent *Objects* for the Exercising of them. I shall therefore observe the usual Method, being now to shew, how Prepared you ought to be, and what Preparations are sufficient; and for your more Profitable Instruction, I shall Discourse particularly of those three Qualifications, in their due order.

I. AND first of *Faith*, which is the Mother and Nurse of all True Religion. By Faith I mean here, in the strict Notion of it, an Act of the *Understanding*, whereby a Man is convinced and satisfied of the Truth of those things which are propounded to our Belief by Divine Revelation, distinguishing *Faith* from *Hope* and *Obedience*, and other Acts of the *Will*, which are *included* in the Notion of Faith,

when 'tis taken in a *larger* and more *comprehensive* Sense. Now in the pursuit of this Subject, I shall do these two things. 1. First shew, *why Faith* is required in a Communicant, that we may understand the *Necessity* of this part of our Duty. 2. What *Faith* is required; or what we are bound to Believe; that we may see the *Extent* of it. And when this is done, I know not what more will be needful to be spoken, touching this matter.

1. WHY Faith is required in a Communicant? And the Reason of it is obvious; because it is the Principle that doth influence, move, and govern our Actions; it being unconceivable, how a Man should be wrought upon, either to put his Trust in God, or to forsake his Impieties, or to do any other Act of Religion, unless he be first persuaded in his Mind, that the Author of our Religion had Authority from God to exact these things at our Hands. and that there is Mercy with God if we be careful to do our Duty; and that nothing but Punishment is to be expected, if we *neglect and despise so great Salvation*. So that without Faith, *as it is impossible to please God*, so it is impossible to answer the *ends and purposes* of this Ordinance; and consequently, the Elements that are taken by an Unbeliever, can do him

no more good than a Morfel put into a Dead Man's Mouth. Even the Word that is Preached doth not profit at all, if it be *not mixed with Faith in them that hear it, Heb. 4. 2.* A thousand Homilies of Righteousness are no more to such, than Metaphysical Discourses to a Brute. In like manner, the Administration of this Sacrament, though to well-prepared Souls it be the Communication of Christ's Body and Blood, yet it availeth not, except there be a Disposition and Principle of Faith in them that Receive it. It is observable, that while our Saviour's Body was on Earth Locally, though a Medicinal Vertue went out of it, so that they who did but touch the borders of his Garment, were Healed of their Diseases, yet it did not operate effectually, without some previous Preparation of Faith. In *Matth. 15. 28.* He told the Woman of *Canaan*, that would not be put off, before he had taken Compassion upon her Child, *O Woman, great is thy Faith; be it unto thee, even as thou wilt.* And when the Woman with a Bloody Issue, had but touched his Cloaths, though she was afraid, for her Presumption, being at last discovered, yet received she this Gracious Answer, *Daughter, be of good Comfort; thy Faith hath made thee whole, Matth. 9. 22.* On the contrary,

you shall find, that the Incredulity of People did, as it were, bind up the Hands of his Omnipotence, and shut up the Bowels of Compassion, so that his Miracles were very few, where their Faith was very rare. A clear instance we have in *Matth. 13.* in his own Country (at *Nazareth*) he did not many Mighty Works, *because of their Unbelief, v. 58.* some indeed he did; for he Healed a few Sick Persons who had *Faith* to be Healed; but *St. Mark* tells us, that *many mighty works he could not do there. Marc. 6. 5.* Now to bring down this Consideration to our present Business: The Body of Christ doth still cast like Influences and Virtues from Heaven, and his Spirit doth Dispense them at this Sacrament; but he Dispenseth them according to his good Pleasure; and he is not pleased to work Miracles on such as do not Believe; but every one Receiveth it, according as he is Prepared by Faith. We see the Sun darteth his Beams into the bowels of the Earth insensibly, and maketh every Plant to Bud, and Germinate, and Shoot forth; but yet his Rays have no Power over Roots that are *Dead and Rotten.* And yet *there* is a Natural and Irresistible power over things below; whereas the Influences which flow down from the Man Christ Jesus, do not
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act Physically and after an uncontrollable manner, neither is there that intrinsic Power in the Sacrament, or such Virtues of the Spirit going along with it, as to work upon Hearts, that are not opened to its Operations by a Lively Faith. No; the Sacrament is the outward and Ritual Means; but Faith is the Moral and inward Instrument of bringing Christ to the Soul, and every Man's Receipts are according as he Believes. And therefore among other things which we are to search and enquire into, we must be careful to look well into our *Creed*, and in the first place Examine our selves, whether we *be indeed in the Faith*, as St. Paul speaks, *2 Corinth. 13. 1.* Meaning, that we must approve our Faith unto God, and our Consciences, and see that it be such as the Gospel requires; and our Hearts must bear us Witness, that we Believe as we should do, before we presume to Eat of this Bread, and to Drink of this Cup.

2. NOW because no Man is able to approve his Faith, or to make any Judgment of it at all, unless he doth first know, *what* his Faith *ought* to be, and how far it is required to *extend*; therefore I shall proceed to the second thing I promised to shew, *viz.* What it is that every Communicant is obliged to Believe, that

you may be satisfied in your Minds, whether you are sufficiently Prepared for the Communion in this respect. And this I shall do the rather, because many have spoken very loosely and extravagantly upon this Theme, as if none could be a Worthy Receiver, except he be perswaded in his Mind, that God Elected him to Salvation from all Eternity, and except he be assured that all his Sins are certainly Pardoned, and that he shall be Absolutely and Infallibly Saved in the day of the Lord. Which Conceits, I am confident, have served to deter thousands from this Admirable and Heavenly Ordinance; who, though they had never such good Meanings, and honest Purposes, and were (as we may believe) Sincere in their Hearts, yet because they could not find themselves thus perswaded, have refrained coming to the Lord's Table, to the great disquiet and prejudice of their Souls. Therefore to remove this rub out of the way, be pleased to take notice, that it is not absolutely necessary for a Man, before he goes to the Sacrament, to be confidently assured of his present Forgiveness, or his Future Felicity. We do not deny, but all Men must be assured of the Truth of God's Promise in the general. Nor do we deny, but that every one is to believe in particular,

particular, that he himself may be Pardoned, and shall be Happy on Condition, that he Sincerely and Honestly endeavours to observe the Precepts of the Christian Religion. We do not deny neither, but a strong assurance there may be in some Eminent Members of the Church, especially when they come to Dye. But that every one is *bound* before he doth Communicate, to be *Absolutely and Peremptorily* assured of his Happiness, is a very Extravagant and groundless Conceit : And that for these two Reasons.

I. BECAUSE the Scripture saith nothing of this or that Man's particular Condition. God hath not made any such Revelations in his Word, and therefore we are not bound to be assured of the thing. For the Word of God *written* is the Adequate Rule of our Faith : So we rightly affirm against the *Romanists*, with respect to their *Traditions*; and so we are to affirm against all Enthusiasts too, with reference to their Airy and Confident *Opinions*. The Holy Scriptures are our Guide; and what they do not say, is not necessary for any of us to Believe. *Quod de Scripturis non habet auctoritatem, eadem facilitate contemnitur, qua probatur*, as St. Jerom said; meaning, that *whatsoever cannot be proved by the Authority of the Scriptures, ought not*

not to be Believed as a Necessary Article of Faith. Now look into the Bible, and see if you can find *your* Names written there, or in the Book of Life; if you can any where find it said, that *your* Sins are Pardoned; or if you can discover any Absolute Decree, that *you* shall Infallibly be Saved. 'Tis true, the Word of God gives us all many Excellent Promises, many great and comfortable Hopes, but still it speaks in General; that *they* who Believe shall not Perish; that they who Repent shall be Forgiven; and that *they* who persevere in well-doing unto the end, shall be Saved: But it saith not in particular, that *I* am such, or that *I* shall fare so: Onely indeed I may draw Particulars out of Generals, by way of Argumentation and Rational Discourse; and I may Judge of my self, by measuring my self with the Rule, and by comparing my Condition and State with the Gospel-terms; and so I may have very comfortable and strong Hopes (enough to quiet my Mind and Spirit) that I am in a State of Grace, and that God will shew Mercy unto me in that day; but to go farther, and to be Absolutely Assured of all this, is not necessary, because we have no plain Revelation to ground that assurance upon.

2. Because such an assurance, were I poss-
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sest of it, could not be a *Divine*, but an *Humane* Faith ; and consequently it would be *Fallible* and very uncertain. For it must be grounded meerly on my reflecting upon my self, and upon my comparing my Condition with the Word of God: So that my Judgment touching mine own State is still but an *Humane Act*, arising from those Observations which I my self make ; and I cannot as firmly and reasonably believe that I am a Penitent, as I do believe that God will Pardon Penitents, because I have *His* word for the latter, and only my own word for the former : And we know that every Man is ready to be *Partial* to himself, and Naturally apt to think better things of himself than he ought to think, and to take every Mole in his Face for a Beauty-spot. Therefore since a Man cannot have any assurance of his State, but by private Reflections upon himself ; seeing such a reflection is an *Humane Act* ; and since every work of Man is deceitful, it plainly follows, that such an assurance is not necessary. I wish therefore that Men would be Modest in these and the like Cases, and not impose such burdens upon their own and other Mens Consciences, as may serve, to rack and disquiet their Minds, but cannot settle them upon a firm bottom. The Faith

of Christ is of an obvious Nature; and since the way to Heaven is strait already, Men should be very careful, that they do not *add* to the difficulties, by inventions of their own Brains, and render that entrance impossible, which already is so narrow, that *few there be that find it.*

IN Answer then to this Enquiry, What it is that every Communicant is bound to Believe? I shall lay down this as a fair and satisfactory Truth, that the Faith required, is a *Cordial* and *Comfortable* Perswasion of the *verity of the common Principles of Christianity comprised in the Creed*; and particularly, *that Christ is so the Saviour of the World, that he is able to save all to the uttermost that come unto God by him,* which is the Sense of that *Article*, touching the *Remission of Sins.* These are plain Assertions, for which we have the Authority of the Scriptures; and when I call this, a *cordial* and *comfortable* Perswasion, I mean such a stedfast Belief in Christ, as serves to apply Christ's Merits to a Man's own *self*; which Divines call, a *Particular Faith.* To believe in Christ *Comfortably*, is not only to Assent to the Truth of the Gospel at *Large*, and in a *General* Proposition; but moreover, to believe for ones *self*; to be thoroughly satisfied, that Christ was the True Messiah, that came to seek
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and to Save that which was lost, and to Save even *Me* among others: That he Tasted Death for *every Man*, and in particular for *Me*, that his Blood is the Propitiation for the Sins of the whole World, and even for *Mine*; that he is an Advocate with the Father for my Brethren, and for *Me* also; that he hath Promised Eternal Life to all that do Obey him, and that even *I* shall have benefit by his Promise, if *I* make good the Condition. In a word, that He is the Redeemer of all Mankind, and that with him there is Plenteous Redemption for *Me*, and for *Thee*, and for us *All*, if we be not wanting to our selves. To be thus perswaded, is enough for any Communicant, *in genere fidei*, and as to Matters of Faith. Indeed, *in genere morum*, as to Matter of Practice, Repentance and Universal Obedience is necessary too: But now we are considering, not how much it is necessary for a Communicant to *Practice*, but how much is needful for him to *Believe*; and such a Faith as I have now described, is sufficient, if Men do but add to this Faith, *Virtue*.

I. THAT this is so, will easily appear, if we impartially consider, first, that this is the Faith which is necessarily *required* of all Christians; and is sufficient for all.

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This is Eternal Life, that they know Thee the only True God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent, saith our Blessed Saviour himself, *Joh. 17. 3.* The Sense of which place is, that the sincere and hearty acknowledgment of the True God, and of his Holy Child Jesus, is the Infallible way to Everlasting Happiness. There are many Truths wrapped and folded up in the Bosome of that Text, which the Compilers of the Apostolical Creed have drawn out into several Articles. To *know* Jesus, or to Confess him to be the *Christ*, signifies in the Dialect of the Holy Ghost, to own him to have been sent by God's Commission; that he came to Redeem us, and to Bless us, and to Dye for us: To have a deep Sense of the All-sufficiency of his Merits; to believe that all Power both to Save and to Destroy, is put into his hands; and to be firmly perswaded, that in, and through him Forgiveness of Sins and a Glorious Immortality may be obtained by all, that will lay hold on him, and Love him in Sincerity. Now if this Faith be sufficient (as touching Matter of Faith) to Entitle a Man to *Eternal Life* (as our Saviour saith it is) then it is enough also to give a Man the Liberty of *Communicating*; because more cannot be required to admit us to the *Lord's Table*, than is necessary

necessary for our admission into *Heaven*. Certainly that Faith which sufficeth to bring us hereafter into the *Presence* of the Lamb, must be sufficient to bring us to the *Supper* of the Lamb ; and that is, not a confident Presumption of a Man's absolute Pardon and Election unto Happiness, but a firm and comfortable Perswasion, that *Jesus Christ came into the World, to Save Sinners*, which is a most faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, saith St. Paul, 1 Tim. i. 15.

2. THAT this Faith is enough for a Communicant will appear, Secondly, from its Anaglogy and Proportion to the Faith of the *First Disciples*. It was St. Peter's Confession (for which he was called Blessed) *Thou art Christ the Son of the Living God*, Matth. 16. 16. It was Martha's Confession, *Lord I believe that thou art Christ the Son of God, that should come into the world*, Joh. 11. 27. It was the Eunuch's Confession, *I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God*, Act. 8. 37. Nay indeed, it was the Confession of all the Apostles, before every particular was extracted which lay hid and folded up in it, *We believe and are sure, that thou art that Christ, the Son of the Living God*, Joh. 6. 69. Now do but consider and judge in your selves: Is it possible for any Rational Man

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to believe, that the Faith which served for the Salvation of those, will not be enough to Dispose and Fit *Us* for the *Sacrament*? Certainly, by the same Faith whereby the Disciples of *Old* felt and handled the Word of Life, we may also *Feed* on him. For this Faith is as unalterable as the Author of it, who is the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever. And if in that plain and easie Belief the Church went to Heaven of *Old*, why may we not do so *still*? And why may we not go to the Sacrament, as to Heaven-gate, by that Faith whereby so many Thousands have all along entered into Paradise.

3. ESPECIALLY if we Consider, in the 3^d place, the Nature and Reason of this present Solemnity. It is the Evangelical Feast, by partaking whereof, we do Renew our Covenant with God, as the *Jews* did by Eating of the Passover. And hence we may conclude, that which Capacitates a Man to enter into Covenant with God first of all, is sufficient to Qualifie and Fit him for the *Renewing* of that Covenant now; because the Terms of the Covenant are all along the same; and what we did at our Baptism, and do now again, is but the same thing acted over and over. Now it is evident from the Holy Scriptures, that the cordial belief
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of the Authority and Merits of Christ, was accounted enough in the Apostles days for the admission of People unto Baptism, which is the *Initiating* Mystery, at which God and Men do interchangeably Seal Indentures first of all. In *Act. 8.* we find *Philip* Preaching to the *Ethiopian* Eunuch, and requiring a Confession of his Creed, that he might be Baptized; and when the Eunuch made this short Confession, *I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God*, it was thought enough to give him a right to the Seal of the Covenant; and so straightway *Philip* went down into the Water, and Baptized him, *v. 38.* The like we Read of *Paul* and *Silas*, how they directed the frightened *Jayler*, to believe on the Lord *Jesus*, *Act. 16. 33.* and instantly upon that Confession, Baptized him. Now we do not any where read, or find any Reason to conjecture, that the Apostles demanded any other Faith of their Converts before the Communion, than what they had delivered unto them to prepare them for Baptism. The same Belief which qualified them for *that*, did also Qualifie them for this *other* Sacrament; for in *Act. 2.* where we meet with the first Converts, and a great number of them, even three Thousand Souls, *St. Luke* relates, that *they were Baptized*, and con-

tinued stedfast in the Apostles Doctrine, and in breaking of Bread, v. 42. And by the Story it seems to be intimated, that in a very short time after they were Baptized, they were all admitted to the Lord's Table.

I add to this, in the last place, that the Primitive Church of Christ required this of Communicants, that they should believe those things to be True, which were taught them by their Pastours; for so *Justin Martyr* expressly tells us; and those things were no other, than the common Faith of all true Christians in all Ages, and which in the *Athanasian Creed* is called, the Catholick Faith; consisting of the Fundamental Articles of our Religion, which were antiently drawn up into short Summaries. And by a passage in *St. Ambrose* it doth appear, that Baptised Persons were not prohibited from coming to the Communion, but for the space of a few days after their Baptism: And this Prohibition was intended, not that they might in that time learn a *New Creed*; but only gain some further Knowledge, touching the *Nature* and *Ends* of this Religious Mystery; still the Faith was one and the same, even a *comfortable belief in Jesus Christ, and him Crucified*.

TO all which, I shall only add the Judgment of the Church, as to the Nature

ture of that Faith, which is necessary for Baptism, &c. as it appears in the Office of *Publick* and *Private* Baptism, in the *Visitation of the Sick*, in the Exposition of the *Creed*, in the *Catechism*; as also in that old useful Book, called the *Institution of a Christian Man*: In all which, no more is lookt upon as necessary, but an hearty assent to the Truth of those common Doctrines of Christianity contained in the Apostolical Symbol.

BY what then hath been thus particularly shew'd, any ordinary Communicant may easily discern, whether his Faith be genuine, and right, and approved, and such as the Gospel doth require. In short, do you believe that the Holy Jesus was the Son of God? That he came into the World, by the Appointment of his Father? That his great Errand, was to Redeem an undone and (without him) a lost World? That he Dyed upon the Cross for this purpose? That his Blood was shed as a Ransom for all? That he paid a Price even for thy poor Soul? And that for his sake thou may'st find Mercy at the hands of God? If this be thy Faith, thou may'st be assured, that thy Faith is as right and true, as ever was the Faith of an Apostle, tho' thou canst not Remove Mountains, nor Heal the Sick with thy shadow. And

therefore thou art thus far well Prepared to be a Receiver, because this is the proper Object of every Christian's Faith, *That Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the World*; and to believe thus much, with a particular application of Christ's Merits to thine own Soul, so that thou canst believe it with Joy, and cast thy self on him with an Humble Confidence, and trust to him for thy present Pardon and future Felicity, this is the proper Act of a Worthy Communicant.

C H A P. V.

Of Repentance.

THERE is another *Special Act* of Religion, which not only every Communicant, but indeed every Christian ought to employ the utmost of his Care about, and that is, *Repentance from dead works*, the Natural Fruit of Faith towards God. In discoursing of this, 'tis requisite for me to shew, 1. First, the true Nature of Repentance, wherein it doth consist. 2dly, Upon what Special Grounds and Reasons it is necessary, before we go to the Communion. And 3dly, how far, and in what *Degree* it is necessary.

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I. FOR the right understanding of the Nature of Repentance, we must not rely upon the groundless, nay Superstitious Conceits of the School-men, who place the whole Work of Repentance, in *Contrition, Confession, and Satisfaction*; meaning, that though a Man be never so broken in Heart, yet he is not a right Penitent, nor fit for the Communion, till he hath privately made an enumeration of his Sins to a Priest, and doth undergo, at least doth Vow, and Promise to undergo some Ritual Penance, to Expiate his Offences. At the bottom of this Doctrine there is a great deal of *Trick and Artifice*, which is quite Foreign to the design and business of Christianity. For *Christ's* Religion is a plain and admirable Method, to make Men universally *Good*; and to bring us to the Love of solid and substantial Vertue, that we may Live the Life of Angels (Pure and Holy) as far as it is consistent with the Nature and Condition of Mortal Men. Accordingly Repentance, means a Zealous and Passionate *Abhorrence* of every thing that is Evil in the *Eye of God*. The common Notion of Repentance implyeth thus much, that what a Man hath done, he wisheth were undone, and resolves to do so no more. And this is the Notion, which the Christian

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Doctors of Old entertained of this matter

* Lombard. lib. 4. dist. 14.
Est autem pœnitentia, ut ait Ambrosius, mala prœterita plangere, & plangenda iterum non committere. Hac vera est pœnitentia, cessare a peccatis. Id. Item Gregorius, pœnitere est antea facta peccata deslere, & stetit non committere. Ita & Isidorus, Irrisor est & non pœnitens, qui adhuc agit quod pœnitet. Item Augustinus, Inanis est pœnitentia quam sequens culpa coinquinat. Quibus addendum illud Tertulliani, ubi emendatio nulla pœnitentia vana.

(as * Peter Lombard himself doth very plainly acknowledge) that true Repentance, lyeth in a sincere Sorrow for all past Miscarriages, and in a resolution never to return again with the Dog to his Vomit, or with the Sow that is washed, to her wallowing in the mire.

THE Holy Scripture (which in this and all other necessary Speculations is our only sure and infallible Guide) gives us this short account of the Nature of Repentance, that it is the *eschewing of Evil, and the doing of Good*. So that it is a perfect change of a Man's purposes and courses, the forsaking of all Iniquity, a New State, a Life of Sanctity and Goodness: And they that place it in a little sorrow of the Mind, joyned with Auricular Confession, and the outward Austerities and Chastisements of the Body, shew more their Love 'of Childishness, and a regard for their own Interest and Authority over Poor People, than their Skill in sound Divinity. To *Repent* signifies in the Sacred Dialect, to become a New Man, to have

an Heart Renewed and Transform'd, and to follow a New, that is a Religious course of Life. The Scripture indeed hath several Expressions that signifie this change: 'Tis called a *New Creature*; the *Renovation of the Mind and Spirit*, the putting on of the *New Man*, the purging of the *Heart* from an *Evil Conscience*, the *abhorring of Evil* and cleaving to that which is *Good*, the turning to *God*, the *Dying to Sin*, the *Mortifying of our Lusts and Affections*, *Repentance from dead Works*; and many more the like Expressions there are; but these are only various delineations of the same thing; several Words and Phrases (proper to Divinity) whereby is meant, the total rectifying of a Man's Temper and Life; or as even an Heathen *Hierocles* * de- * Hieroc. describes it, *the recovering of that clean Life*, in Pythag. which by a mixture of Passions was Defiled, p. 165, *the correcting of all inconsiderate courses*, the *shunning of all Foolish Actions and Words*, and the *Institution of such a Life as is not to be Repented of*. For our Nature being vitiated and depraved, the Business of Religion is, to new-mould our Tempers, to take away every thing that sowers Humanity, and unbecometh Creatures that ought to be governed by right Reason, and so by degrees to bring us, as near as 'tis possible, to the Temper of Christ,

and to the Nature of God himself. The Reason of it is, because the ultimate end of Christ's Religion, is to make us perfectly *Happy* in another World; in order whereunto, 'tis absolutely necessary for us to partake of the *Divine Nature* in this Life, and to be made like unto God in Goodness and Purity. For all Happiness doth consist in the Enjoyment of that which Answers ones Desires, which agrees with his Mind, which is suitable to his Faculties, which gives him all manner of Satisfaction. So that in the Nature of the thing, it is impossible for a Man to be fit for the Enjoyment of Heaven, that is not of an Heavenly Mind and Temper. The Condition of that place is not suitable to the frame and disposition of any filthy Heart: And therefore every Evil Man that Dies before his Heart is changed, must be Miserable of course, for he carries a Hell along with him, he goes out of the World with such a Temper, as makes him fit only for the Society and Conversation of *Wicked Spirits*. Men that are Fierce, Haughty, and Froward, Men that are full of Malice and bitterness; Men that hate every thing that is good; Men that delight in Cruelties and Bloodshed; Men that are Contentious, Vexatious, and Troublesome

some; Men that are in Love with Mischief, that Live without God, that mind only Earthly and Wicked things, and that wallow in Sensualities and Uncleaness; whither can we suppose such Devilish Tempers *fit* to go, but to the Company of Devils and Spirits like unto themselves? It requires a great deal of care and pains, to mend a Man's Nature, to rectifie and regulate his Temper, so as to dispose him for the Enjoyment of God, and to make him *receptive* and *capable* of the Felicities of Heaven. It is an excellent Expression that of St. Paul's, Col. 1. 12. *Giving thanks unto the Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in light; ἡμεῖς ἁγίων*, that hath made us *fit* for a Portion of that Inheritance; that hath so wrought upon our Hearts, that we are *Prepared* and *Qualified*, rightly *Fitted* and *Condition'd* for the Enjoyment of *Heaven*.

NOW all this is done by a sincere and hearty Repentance; when a Man reflecting upon the Love of God, and upon the Folly, Turpitude, and Heinousness of his own Sins, is broken in Heart through a deep Sense of them, and from that hour vows and resolves upon entire Obedience to the Divine Will. Accordingly he enters presently upon a New State of Life, govern-

governing his Desires with a strong hand, checking his former Inclinations, keeping his Lusts and Affections under command, and stedfastly resisting those Temptations which Betray'd him before into the hands of the Destroyer. By this means he extirpates by degrees those vicious habits, which once were not only his Life, but his *Plague* too, and by using himself to a course of Virtue and Religion (which he finds to be infinitely more *easy* and *delightful* as well as *safe*) he soon comes to be out of Love with Sin, and is so renewed in the Spirit of his Mind, that the great care and employment of his Life, is to Reform himself Universally, and to *yield up his Members as the Servants and Instruments of Righteousness*.

THIS is briefly the Nature of Repentance, a perfect and total change; and they are very dangerously mistaken who are taught to believe, that if they find in themselves some Remorse of Conscience, some trouble of Mind, together with general and imperfect purposes of amendment, their Penitence is sufficient, as long as they have the Priest's *Absolution*. Alas! all this comes vastly short of *Reformation*; without which all the rest are *Unprofitable*: For all the *Absolutions* in the World will do no good, without an utter detestation and forsaking of Sin in the Penitent:

nor

nor will all his Fears, all his Remorse, all his Confessions avail him, if when he goes for *Absolution*, he looks with a kind and friendly Eye upon his *Vices*, and cherisheth that Uncleanness in his Bosom, which by the Laws of God he is bound to cast away. For it is no easie matter for any to lead a Lewd Life, without some trouble and inquietness of Mind; and for a Man first to Sin, and then Confess, and then Sin again, is nothing else, but to drive a *circular Trade of Hypocrisie*; for all this is very consistent with a Wicked Life: Because after this rate, there is no necessity of entire and universal Holiness, (*without which, St. Paul saith, there is no seeing of God*) but People may give themselves up all their days to all manner of Wickedness and Villany, and may think to be Saved nevertheless. What a smooth and pleasant way would this be into the Kingdom of God, were it but true? How easily after this rate is the Sinner and the Saint reconciled? But what a Scandal is it to Christianity, and what a fatal prejudice is it to a good Life, when Men are taught such an Artificial Method, how to Save their Souls, and their Sins too? For who will undertake that troublesom and painful task, of *Mortifying his Lusts*, of *parting with a right Eye*, or *cutting off a right hand*,
and

and of being *Crucified to the World*, if he be perswaded that he cannot possibly mis-carry, as long as he hath at hand such a present and easie Remedy as this is, Confess and be Absolved. Be not therefore deceived in a case of such huge moment and weight. True Repentance is not a thing of such quick and superficial dispatch, it must reach to the very *Heart* and *Mar-row*; it must alter and transform the *whole Man*, it must *bring forth Fruits meet for Repentance*; it must express it self by an Universal Obedience to the Precepts of the Gospel, it must have that good effect upon Mens Spirits, as to make them follow whatsoever *things are Just, and Honest, and Pure, and Lovely, and of good Report.*

2. THE *Nature* of Repentance being thus Explained, I shall not need to spend much time upon the next point, touching those *Special Grounds* and *Reasons*, which render Repentance necessary, before we go to the Communion. For every Man's Conscience cannot but tell him, that he ought to come to so Sacred a Mystery with clean Hands, and a very pure Heart. However, that Discourses of this kind may not seem fantastical and groundless, the Necessity of this thing will plainly appear from these following Considerations.

1. From that *Analogy* which this Evangelical

lical Christian Feast beareth unto those Antient *Sacrificial* Feasts, of which I have formerly Discoursed at large. At those Solemnities (as *Gyraldus* observes) even the Heathens thought it the most necessary part of their Religion,

to be free from an Evil Conscience. They were wont at those times, *to Confess their Guilt, to Profess Repentance for all their Faults,*

In Sacrificiis rite celebrandis majorem nullam ceremoniam fuisse videmus, quam nil sibi conscire, bonos ac pios esse. Gyrald. Hist. deor. syn. 17.

and by their dejected Countenances, and modest Behaviour, to express their great Sorrows for what was past. They would wash their Bodies in Rivers, and present themselves at the Altars of their Gods in pure and clean Apparel, with washen Hands, and naked Feet, as significations of the Purity of their Minds; and when the Solemnity began, as the Priest asked with a loud voice, *tis mde who is here?* So the People answered, *πυμοι καγαδοι* many Men and Good; esteeming Sanctity and Goodness to be absolutely necessary in such as were to Feast before their Deities. Among the Jews it was customary to use several Ritual ways of Sanctification (such as the cleansing of their Bodies, and the scowring of their very Cloaths) before they presented their Oblations unto God, or durst to feed upon the remains of their

Id. ibid.

their Sacrifices. They had divers washings and carnal Ordinances imposed upon them, *until the time of Reformation*, saith the Apostle, *Heb. 9. 10.* One eminent instance we have, *1 Sam. 16.* there *Samuel* goes to *Bethlehem*, to Sacrifice unto the Lord, and to Feast with *Jesse* and his Sons upon part of the Oblations; but before he would either slay the Heifer, or sit down with them at Meat, he commanded them to *Sanctifie themselves*, (according to the Custom) *v. 5.* Now these legal Purifications, were so many Notices and Indications of that *inward* and *Spiritual* Purity, which is necessary in all, who present themselves before the Lord, and profess to be of his Household and Family. For which Reason the Prophets, who were Expositors of the Law, called upon the People at every turn, to mind that Sanctity of Heart and Spirit, which was signified by these External Rites, and without which, all their Services were so many *vain Oblations*. So God himself calls them, *Jer. 1. 12, 13.* *When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my Courts? Bring no more vain Oblations; that is, Heartless Sacrifices, such Sacrifices as were without the Heart, not of the Beast, but of the Man; empty Services, that were without a broken*
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and contrite Spirit. To this purpose 'tis said, *Iſa. 66. 3. He that killeth an Ox, is as he that Slew a Man; he that Sacrificeth a Lamb, as he that cutteth off a Dog's neck; he that offereth an Oblation, as he that offereth the Blood of Swine; and the Reason follows, because they have chosen their own ways, and their Soul delighteth in their own Abominations.* 'Tis Holiness that God requires, rather than Sacrifice; and so much was intimated to them, when they were appointed to wash, before they entred into the Sanctuary. To which purpose, saith the Psalmist, *Pſal. 26. 6. I will wash my hands in Innocence, and so will I compass thine Altar:* Meaning, that by cleansing the outward parts, Men were taught to Cleanse and Sanctifie their Minds, chiefly, and that Innocence is mainly necessary in such as go about to meddle with Holy things. And this is particularly observable from the Ordinance concerning the Passover, which was a *Type and Shadow* of this *Christian Ordinance*. Though every Jew that was rightly Qualified, was bound under pain of Death, to bring the Offering of the Lord in his appointed Season; yet if he had any *Legal Impurities* upon him; if he were a *Leper*, or had a *running Issue*, or had been *Defiled by touching a Dead Carcass*, then he was severely bound to forbear

bear the Passover for a time ; he was to defer it for the space of a Month ; because it was a general Rule, the Soul that eateth the Flesh of the Sacrifice of Peace-Offerrings, having his Uncleanesses upon him, even that *Soul shall be cut off from his People*, Lev. 7. 20. *Philo the Jew* hath rightly observed, that God Instructed Men by these Rites and Forms and outward Symbols, how they ought to make their approaches unto his Altar, either to Pray or to give thanks unto him ; that they should bring no *latent Diseases*, no Corruptions of *Soul* along with them. And never is it more necessary for Men to lay their Impurities aside, than when they come to this Christian Sacrifice. The Body of the Lamb was a Type and Figure of the Flesh of Christ ; and as we cannot refuse Eating without being *Guilty*, as well as *Foolish* and *Improvident* ; so neither can we be Innocent, if we Eat with our Uncleanesses about us ; this is no other, than *to Eat and Drink Judgment to our selves*, 1 Cor. 11.

2. BESIDES, 2^{dly}, the Nature of this Great Mystery is well to be considered, for (as I have shew'd) it is the *Covenant Feast* under the Gospel, even as the Paschal Supper, and other Sacrificial Banquets were under the Law : And Repentance

is indispensably required of all that come to *Contract* with God. There is a remarkable place in *Psal.* 10. 16, 17. *Unto the Wicked God saith, why dost thou Preach my Laws, and takest my Covenant into thy Mouth, whereas thou hatest to be Reformed?* The Psalmist doth manifestly allude to an Ancient Custom of making Covenants with God by Sacrifice, as it is, v. 5. For the Offering being made upon the Altar, and part of it being burnt as *God's Portion*, the remainder was taken away by the Covenanting Parties, as *their share*; and their manner was, to Eat it together before the Lord, thereby testifying that they were now in Communion and Fellowship with him. And this the Psalmist calls, *the taking of God's Covenant in their mouths*; for it was the Eating of his *Sacrifice*, which was a *Sign and Token* of the Covenant. Now, what they did of Old, when they did Communicate of the Flesh of Beasts, That (the very same thing) we Christians do now; when we partake of Bread and Wine, we do Solemnly Profess that we are in Covenant with God, and Solemnly Confirm this Covenant at his Table. Now the Terms of the Covenant under the Gospel, are these on our part, that we will serve God in *Holiness and Righteousness all the days of our Life*; and if our inward
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intentions be not according to our outward Profession, but we hate to be Reformed, what horrible Presumption is it to take the Symbol and Seal of God's Covenant into our Mouths? All this is Mockage, and Hypocrisie, a Solemn and Theatrical kind of *jeer*, if Men do not stedfaly resolve and purpose in their Hearts, to become *New Men*, and for ever to please God in *Newness of Life*.

3. ADD to this, in the third place, that the Blessings tendred us at this Sacrament, are such, as do require a Sincere Repentance from dead Works, as a Qualification and Disposition to make us meet to be Partakers of them. For here Christ is tendred, with all the Fruits and Benefits of that Sacrifice, which he once for all offered up to his Father upon the Cross: And of these, Forgiveness of *Sin* is one great Blessing. But there is *no Pardon to the Wicked*, to such as are still in Love with their Abominations, and intend to persist and go on in their Wickedness. In order therefore to a due Celebration of this Mystery, as every Knee should bow, so every Heart must be broken, and every filthy Lust Mortified. For Conversion goeth *before* Forgiveness, as the *Condition* that Capacitates the Receiver; and the Dominion of Sin must be Conquered, before the
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Guilt of it can be removed; it being impossible for Vice and Grace to Reign together, or that God and Belial should sit together in the same Throne. 'Tis Repentance that Prepares the way for Mercy, and makes *room* for that Pardon, which we beg for at the Altar; and that we may be sure of Forgiveness, we must so Condemn all our Impieties, as to *forsake* them, and so to grieve for them, as to *detest* and *abhor* them. For Christ is not an Absolute, but a Conditional Saviour: Nor doth he Ransom any by his Blood from Eternal Death, but whom he Redeems, first by the assistance of his Grace from those Iniquities, whereof *Death is the Wages*. All that Bliss and Happiness, which is reserved for us in Heaven, and whereof we have a *foretast* and *earnest* at this Sacrament, is the Portion of Holy Souls only, that Love the Lord Jesus in Sincerity, and resolve to Obey him.

C H A P. VI.

Of the Degrees and Measures of Repentance. According as Mens Sins are. Of Unwilful Sins.

THIS being enough to shew the Necessity of Repentance in order to a due Communion ; I proceed in the next place to shew, what *Measures and Degrees* of Repentance are necessary. For the clearing of this too, we must of necessity consider the different Degrees and Measures of Sin ; because Repentance must bear some *Proportion* to the Offence ; and as a Man's Sins are of a *greater* or a *lesser* Nature, so must his *Repentance* be also.

NOW considering that the Act and Consent of a Man's *Will*, is that which renders an Action *formally* Sinful, and the more wilful any Sin is, the more it *riseth* and *swelleth* in greatness ; we must first distinguish between *Wilful* and *Unwilful* Sins ; for so it will the more fully and evidently appear, what degree that Repentance

penitance must be of, which is to be proportionable and suitable to *both*.

WILFUL Sins then are such, as are committed with a Man's full *Approbation* and *Choice*; when he deliberates upon it; or at least hath means and time to deliberate, and resolves with himself to do the thing; either for the gratifying of some Lust, or for the procuring of some worldly end, though he knows the Action to be contrary to God's Law, and might refrain from it, if he would make a due use of that strength which God hath either fixed in his Nature, or added by his *Grace*. Such an Action is rightly said to be *wilful*, because a Man's Will hath the greatest hand and stroak in it. For we suppose in this case, that the Understanding is or may be sufficiently informed, and that the Inclinations are not so strong, nor the Temptations so great, but that they might be Victoriously Resisted, if the Party would but give his mind to it, and set his Heart to employ his Power and Abilities. And therefore the Sin is called *Wilful*, because though some little fault may perchance lye both in his Understanding and Affections too, yet the main blame lyes upon the *Will*, for carrying the Action on with *Resolution* and *Obstinacy*; because he is *set* upon frowardness.

UNWILFUL Sins are such, as have not the Consent, or not the full Consent of the Will; but proceed rather from some Natural and Hereditary *Imperfection*; either from a defect of *Knowledge*, by means whereof a Man either *wants* light in his Understanding, or looks upon things in a wrong light (and then 'tis a Sin of *Ignorance* :) or else it proceeds from a defect of *Strength*, from some *Inability* and *Lameness* of Humane Nature, by means whereof his own corrupt Inclinations within are too *quick* for him, or some Temptations from without are so sudden, so *thick*, so *violent* against him, that he cannot hold out against himself, as the case stands, but doth that which he knoweth he should not, in a hurry and without due *Consideration*, his poor feeble Nature being over-born; and his Counsels, which otherwise he would use, being prevented by a surprise (and this is that which is called, a Sin of *Weakness* and *Infirmity*.)

1. OF these *Unwilful* Sins I shall speak in the first place; and in the Process of this Discourse, I shall, 1. give some particular account of these Sins: And, 2. shew how far, and to what degree we are to Repent of them, before we come to the Blessed Sacrament.

1. THE First kind of these *Unwilful* Sins, and that which is the ground and Original

Original of all the rest, is the *Sinful Inclination* in every Man's Nature, that Prone-ness, Propensity, and Aptness unto Evil, which cleaves to every Child of *Adam* inseparably from the Womb; so that his Nature through meer Impotency and Hereditary weakness, lies always *bending and bowing* towards *Wickedness*. Though good Men do not yield to this Inclination, and every Man hath sufficient assistance from God to check it; yet all Men have more or less their share of it, so that they are still apt to flag and swerve from their Duty, though they be in a State of Grace and Regeneration. This *Natural Inclination* and crookedness is termed *Sin*, because *materially* it is so, being a *repugnancy* to the Law of God, and a *deviation* from it. For all Sin is, *ἀνομία*, as the Apostle defines it, 1 *Job.* 3. 4. *A Transgression of, or a Contrariety unto, or a deflection and dissonancy from the Law*; and because the Hereditary Propensity of our Nature is *such*, therefore is it truly said to be *Sin* and *sinful materially* and in it self. But yet on the other side, it cannot by any means be reckoned among *wilful* or *voluntary* Sins; because this Inclination of Nature is not contracted by any Act of Man's own *Will*, by any consent, choice, or approbation of his own; nor indeed hath he any more

hand in it, than he had in the Formation of his Body. It is no more his Will that he is Born with Evil Inclinations, than 'twas his Will he was made up of such and such parts, or that he came into the World, with an Appetite after Food, or with an Inclination to Sleep and Rest, and such other Natural Actions.

2. BESIDES this Natural *Inclination* and *Aptitude* unto Sin, there are several other things which come under the Notion of Evil, but yet cannot be called *Wilful Acts*, but meer *Infirmities*. 1. As *Evil thoughts*, especially in the first rising of them, and when they are not attended with subsequent Actions, nor entertain'd with Pleasure and Delight. I call such thoughts *Evil*, because they are of themselves breaches of that Spiritual Law of God which reacheth the very *Heart* and *Soul*, and requires Purity in the inward parts: But yet they are not to be accounted voluntary Transgressions, because they are not Acts of the Will, the Results of deliberation and choice, but the sudden breakings out of a Distemper'd Nature, things which our inward Corruptions do ever and anon cast out; as Putrified Blood is apt upon fermentation to throw out Boils and Blisters, and the like. Indeed our Blessed Saviour, speaking of those

those things which come forth from the Heart, and Defile a Man, mentioneth particularly *Evil Thoughts*: Matth. 15. 18, 19. *Those things which proceed out of the mouth, and come forth from the Heart, they Defile the Man; for out of the Heart proceed Evil Thoughts, &c.* But in this place is meant, not those indeliberate and sudden startings of the Mind, which I have now been speaking of, but *black Designs, studied Purposes, and Malicious Contrivances of the Heart*, especially against a *Man's Life*, as our Learned Paraphrast hath very rightly noted. These inward motions which we feel within us, and which all Good People complain of, as long as they are *bare thoughts* and surprises of Soul, are not to be reckon'd as *Wilful Sins*, nor are they inconsistent with a State of Grace and Salvation. They are many times the effects of a Disorder'd Brain, and of a Body Distemper'd with the Spleen, Melancholy, and the like; so that they are often as Natural Effects of some Disease, as hot and cold fits are the effects of an Ague. They rise in the Mind *without* ones Will, nay *against* it; and they are to Good Christians an *Affliction* and *Trouble*: As they are *afraid* of them before hand, so they are apt to be ruffled when they come, and to be Discomposed and Tormented for them when

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when they are gone. This is a plain Argument, that in such Persons they are not *Wilful Sins*; and therefore they do not Defile them, so as to render them loathsome or impure in the Eye of God: However they must be Repented of in some measure, as I shall shew in its proper place.

2. There are too divers *Omissions*, which the best of Men are Subject to be guilty of, through the common and inevitable course of Humane Affairs, and by Reason of the insufficiency of Humane Nature, though assisted with Divine Grace. Now God forbid we should think, that all such Omissions are Sins of *Wilfulness*; for many of them proceed from an *hurry* of Secular Matters, which makes even Good Men forgetful of some things, and unwillingly wanting in others; nor is it possible it should be otherwise. Many Omissions also proceed from meer *Inadvertency*, in cases which have no room for deliberation: Nay though a Man be never so cautious and considerate, yet 'tis not in his power to debate and consult with himself in every *particular* and *minute* contingency; the frail and narrow condition of Humanity will not allow it; nor is it imaginable, that any Man can be so watchful at all times, as not to Sleep at all, nor suffer any thing to *escape him*. The Spirit truly is

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willing, but the Flesh is weak, as our Saviour told his Disciples when they slept instead of Ministering Comfort to him, and Praying for him in his great Agony, *Matth. 26.* And as long as we carry Flesh about with us, so long we shall be wanting in some part or other of our Duty. The daily Sacrifice may be some times neglected, at least in some measure, and our Devotion may be missing for a while in a croud of Business. Serene and Pleasant times are apt to draw out our thoughts from their close retirements, like Bees sporting in the Sun. The Necessities of the Saints are not always in our thoughts, and so those thirsty Channels may remain without any Water from our Cistern. Many Blessed Opportunities, of doing our selves and others good, slide away from us insensibly; nay even in our Callings, to which commonly we Sacrifice most of our time and care, we are not always so vigilant and industrious, but that we may deserve the Censure of some *Negligence*, though we may not deserve the charge of *Dishonesty*.

3. There is another sort of Infirmary, *viz.* a mixture of *Imperfection* in our very best Performances. Though the thing be done with an Honest and Good Heart, yet we come short as to the *Degree*, and fail

fail more or less in the *manner* of doing it. *Who can understand his Errors?* saith the Psalmist, *Psal. 19. 12.* Such is our Condition, that like the Image which *Nebuchadnezzar* saw in his Dream, it is not all of a Temper, but consisteth of a medly, so that there is something in us of *Gold*, something of *baser Metal*, and something of *Clay*: By means whereof it cometh to pass, that our good Works are defective, and stand in need of a Pardon. We find by daily *Experience*, that what State soever we are in, what Graces soever we are to Exercise, what Duties soever we are to perform, many Infirmities still cleave to us like a Leprosie which we cannot totally cure. In our Prosperity we are apt to be lifted up in our Minds; and when a sweeping Affliction comes upon us, we are as ready to be discouraged and cast down. Our Faith is apt to be attended with some distrust, our Hopes with some Presumption, our Obedience with some abatements of Love, our Charity with a little touch of Pride, our Meditations with a great deal of Distraction; and even at our Devotion, when we take down the stringed Instruments from the wall, to chant out Praises and Prayers to our God, our Zeal suffereth some alloy by many wandring thoughts, nor do our Hearts keep exact time with
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our Voice, but are apt to *flatten*, and be out of *tune*, when our Mouths are full of Hosanna's in the highest. *Briefly*, our Imperfections are so deeply rooted in us, that we cannot get rid of them; in our Closets, in our most serious and fixt Contemplations, they are with us; nay, the very House of God is not a *Sanctuary* from them, but they are apt to bear us company even to the Altar: Yet this is for our Comfort, that if we sincerely endeavour to Conquer and cast them off, they are not Wilful Sins, nor will God reckon them unto us to our Condemnation, because they are *Infirmities* which we cannot help.

4. Besides all these Infirmities, there are several *indecent Actions*, which though they cannot be justified, or totally excused, if rigorously consider'd, yet cannot properly come under the Notion of Sins that are perfectly *Wilful*; because they are not the result of mature *Deliberation*, but rather are done *casually*, by means of some surprising Temptations *without*, which on a sudden overcome ones *Passions*, or by means of some great disturbance *within*, which for that time hinders the use of *Reason*, and are too *hard for it*. Even in a State of Innocence, Man was set lower than the Angels, though the British
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part was so Subject to the Rational Faculty of his Soul, that it was wholly under its command. Ever since the Fall, Mens Affections have been Rebels; which have been apt to over-master them, and carry them away against their Reason; because Reason being many times wonderfully disturbed by them, it is not powerful enough to Govern and Rule them. And though the Grace of God be abundant under the Gospel, and very powerful in such as humbly obey it; yet even in Men that are Regenerated by God's Spirit, there is still a mixture of Good and Evil, as the hottest Tempers have some degrees of Cold; so that a Wise and Holy Man, may through *Surprise*, or *Incogitancy*, or the *Violence* of a Temptation, be overtaken unawares. It was not the case of *Moses* alone, to speak *unadvisedly with his Lips*, being provoked to it by the Peoples Murmurings: Nor was it *David's* Case alone, to say in his haste, *all Men are Lyars*; nay, it was not *Peter's* Case alone, to deny his Lord through *extremity of Fear*. Every one is apt sometimes to be born down by the Tempter, or by his own masterful and disorderly Passions; nor is there any Man but is sensible of some perturbations of Soul, which are usually occasioned, either by his own Hereditary weakness,

weakness, or by some ill Accidents in his Family, or by some Troubles in his Calling, or by the disappointment of his Expectations, or by the common Crosses of the World, or by the Apprehensions of some Evil to come, or by the Sense of some Calamity that is past, or by a Natural Distemper and Sicknes, in his Constitution, and by divers Accidents more, which the Subtilty and Malice of the Tempter maketh use of to disturb his Peace. Now, though in these Actions there be some *little* concurrence of the Will, enough to make them imputable to us, if God should deal with us according to *rigour* and *severity*, yet by the Mercies of the Gospel, they are not actually imputed to a *Good Man*, because they are not properly voluntary, that is, they proceed not from *propense Malice*, or a *deliberate Judgment*, but from sudden and displeasing Contingencies, so that he would not be Guilty of them, were he not in Unfortunate Circumstances.

2. THE Nature and Quality of Unwilful Sins being thus Explained, it is necessary now in the next place to consider, *how far*, and to *what degree*, we are to Repent of them before we Eat and Drink at the Lord's Table: For if Men entertain false Notions of this matter, it is impossible

ble for them to be Satisfied that they are duly Prepared, as long as they labour under those Notions, especially if they be People of *Tender* and *Scrupulous* Spirits.

1. FIRST then in general we must Note, that we are not obliged to Repent of Infirmities in such an high degree, as to Vow, Promise, and Undertake, that we will keep our selves free from all manner of Sin. Though we are bound to be very watchful over our ways, and must resolve with our selves not to act *knowingly* and *presumptuously* against God's Commandments; yet it doth not lye in our *Power* to live wholly Innocent from *every the least offence*. The Divine Grace doth *assist* and *strengthen* our Natures, but it doth not *Destroy* them: *Men* we are *still*, subject to the Frailties of Poor Mortal Creatures, and as long as we are compassed about with Flesh, we cannot lead such an *Angelical* Life, as to be clean from all Impurities, as those Blessed Spirits in Heaven are. The Condition of our *Nature* cannot bear it; therefore the thing being impossible, we are not obliged at any time to resolve upon such *high* degrees of Sanctity as are out of our reach. For which Reason we cannot conceive our selves obliged to it in order to a due Celebration of the *Eucharist*: For at this great Solemnity we renew that
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Covenant we made at our Baptism, which is, not to be void of all manner of uncleanness, but to Renounce the Devil and our own Lusts, *so as not to follow or be led by them*, (as our Church hath excellently exprest it in the Office of Baptism) that is, so as not to be Govern'd, or Commanded, or Perswaded by them, to do that which we know to be Evil. 'Tis said indeed, 1 Joh. 3. 9. that *whosoever is born of God, doth not commit Sin*; nay, that *he cannot Sin, because he is born of God*. But this is to be understood of Sins of *forecast and deliberation*, which profligate Persons commit willingly and with greediness. There is in a Regenerated Person, such a Vital Principle of Grace and Goodness, as doth alter and rectifie his Nature; so that if he doth readily obey the energy thereof, it must needs have such an influence upon him, that to Sin *Wilfully*, is, as it were, *against his Nature and Temper*; and though it be not *absolutely*, yet 'tis *Morally* impossible for him to Act Presumptuously; it goes against his Stomach, like a Dose of Poyson, which he cannot away with, but abhors the very thoughts of it. Now when a Man is thus disposed, his Repentance is right, and he ought to be comforted with it, and to bless God for it: And though he finds himself lyable to

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many Infirmities, he should not be cast down so, as to conclude himself utterly unfit for the Communion; because it is not in any Man's Power to be absolutely perfect in this world. And besides, there is a great deal of difference between *Infirmities* and *Sins*, if we speak properly, and according to the Language and Sense of the Holy Scriptures. For, as our Learned Paraphrast hath well observed, to *Sin*, and to *commit Sin*, and the like Phrases, denote a *Deliberate*, *Presumptuous*, Commission of Sin; not to every Sin of Ignorance, incogitancy, or frailty; but Sins after deliberation, and advised Commission of it. This is that which is meant, by letting *Sin Reign* in ones Body, by *obeying* it in the Lusts thereof, by *yielding up* ones Members as Instruments of Unrighteousness, by being the *Servant of Sin*, by *fulfilling the Lusts of the Flesh*, by *walking after the Flesh*, and the like Expressions, which signifie, not acts of Humane Infirmity, but Wickedness done with an *high hand*, and a *stiff neck*, and contrary to the Dictates of a Snubbing and Clamorous Conscience, with the full Consent and Approbation of a Froward Will. Such a course as this, every one is bound at his peril so to Repent of, as to relinquish and forsake it utterly, (as I shall shew hereafter.) But this is not the

the Case of a Good Man; who slips by Reason of meer *Weakness*, and who *Labours* and *Groans* under the Sense of his manifold weaknesses, and strives daily to overcome them. His sincere endeavours are accepted, although he cannot *perfectly* and *totally* overcome them.

1. TO speak now more particularly in reference to those several sorts of Infirmities, which I have mentioned and discoursed of before: Though they are but Infirmities, and such too as are more or less unavoidable, yet 'tis to be remembered, that they are *Sinful* Infirmities; *Sinful materially*, and in some degree; and therefore are not to be past by, without a *suitable* Repentance.

1. And first for that *Sinful Inclination*, which is in our common Nature: However it was propagated and derived to us without our consent, it must not remain in us with our liking or approbation; much less must it be served with our willing compliance. No, our Repentance in this case must consist in two things. 1. There must be a true *Sorrow and Grief* of Heart for this Evil Inclination, as the unhappy Original of all actual Sin. 2. This Sorrow must be improved into a *striving* and *struggling* against our very selves; so that sincere endeavours be used to check this byas of
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Nature, which continually bends towards the wrong way. This may be done by several ways; as, by Reading of good Books, especially the Holy Scriptures, and particularly our Saviour's Sermon on the Mount, and the sad History of his Sufferings, enough of it self, to correct a Man's Proneness to those Sins, which did cost the Redeemer of our Souls so dear: So likewise, by constant Prayer, by frequent Communion, by serious and Godly Meditations, by the diversions of an Honest and Profitable Conversation; by having the Promises of God often in ones thoughts; by Contemplating daily upon the Glories and endless Felicities of another World; by due reflections upon the Nobleness of Virtue, and upon the Folly as well as Foulness of a base Action; by thinking upon ones latter end; and I must not omit to say too, by furnishing ones Mind with sound and Virtuous Principles. For there are many Principles in the World, which serve to *Debauch*, even the *Depraved* Nature of Mankind, rendring the Practice of Substantial Religion altogether *unnecessary*, making Sin *Venial*, and turning Piety, the *Greatest* thing in the World, into a meer empty Formality, I had almost said, into a ludicrous piece of Craft and Traffick. Such Principles are so far from mending

mending Nature, that they make it worse than they found it, and raise Mens inclinations into a Career and Greediness after Vice, and into Luxurious Satisfaction in it; so that too great care cannot be taken of seasoning the Heart with *wholsom* and sound Doctrine, as *St. Paul* speaks, *2 Tim. 4.* That is, with such Principles as are *Sanatary of Nature, and Restoratives of Virtue*, wherein the Life of Religion doth consist. Now if a Man be diligent and careful to act after this manner, it is enough as to this point; for though he cannot wholly *Conquer* his Inclinations, yet by these methods he will by degrees *subdue* them in a very great *measure*; so that though they still continue within him, they shall not hurt him, because he doth all that is in his power to do; and he may be sure, that what he cannot help, God will certainly Pardon.

2. MUCH to the same purpose we may say of those *Evil Thoughts*, which are apt to break out upon the Mind insensibly, and unawares; they are so to be Repented of, as to be *bewail'd* and *stifled* with all possible *speed*. For if they be *morosæ delectationes*, (as Casuists are wont to speak) *cherish'd* and *indulged* for some Pleasure they bring along with them,

then they become somewhat more than *Infirmities*. Though they are *Involuntary* in respect of their first *starting*, yet they grow into *Wilful Sins* by that *Continuance* which is consented to, and usually prove fatal in their Consequence, and Issue; because many times they are a Prelude to dishonesty, when opportunity serves: As Adultery in the Heart often breaks out into Adultery in the Eye; so that a Wise Man must deal with his Evil Thoughts, as a vigilant Governour doth with *Rebels*, *Suppress* and *Dissipate* them as soon as possibly he can. The Methods I have mentioned already are very proper in this Case also; and if a Man doth sedulously apply himself to the use of them, though he will meet with some struglings and difficulties in the Conflict, yet by degrees he will be a Conquerour: To be sure, his hearty Resistance will be rewarded as an act of Fortitude and Virtue. 'Tis this *Resistance* of our own Evil Thoughts, that the God of Purity regards; and when the first motions of them are thus resisted, the malignity of them is gone, because they are unwillful acts, that proceed from an invincible debility of Nature; nay many times from some inveterate Distemper in ones *Body*, which as naturally casteth up
ugly

ugly *Idea's* into the *Brain* and *Fancy*, as over-moist *Soyls* cast up Vapours and Fogs into the Air; and though for a while they bring a Cloud over ones Spirit, yet common Experience shews, that the day breaks up again; and therefore he that is disturbed with things of no greater moment than these, ought no more to be frightened from the Holy Communion, or dejected in his mind, than if he were sick of the *Spleen*; there being such a vast difference between Matters of *this* nature, and an *Evil Conscience*.

3. THE other Particulars I shall bring under one common Consideration, because the same things in a manner are to be said of them all. As for those involuntary *Omissions* which the best Men cannot but be sensible of, and those mixtures of *Imperfection* which they find in their Noblest Actions; and those irregularities to which the common frame and condition of Humanity makes us all subject; every Man ought, as to be humbled for them by a *general* Repentance, so to beg pardon for them in *David's* Style; *O cleanse thou me from my secret faults*, Psal. 19. 12. So also to guard himself from them with that care and vigilance which becomes a Man of an honest and sincere heart. This is certain, that if we do but

secure our hearts unto God, he will secure all his mercies to us. It is not absolute and spotless perfection he expects from us, but sincerity, which is *Evangelical Perfection*. As long as we are Men we shall be feeble, and as long as we are feeble, it cannot be but we must trip sometimes, or tread a little awry, especially where our way is long, and the ground slippery. But if we do not wilfully turn aside out of the right Path, nor fall, so as to Apostatise from the Truth, or cast away our Righteousness, such is the Divine Goodness and Mercy that we shall not fall into *Perdition*. *There is not a Righteous Man on the Earth that Sinneeth not*, Eccles. 7. 10. Bring in all the whole Army of Noble Saints and Martyrs, and you shall hear them complain of their Infirmities. God gives us Grace sufficient to enable us to maintain a Combate with the World, the Devil, and our own Lusts; but not so much as will gain us a perfect and entire Victory, so as to free us from all further Allarms, and Onsets. And indeed there is good Reason why we should not be unexercised by Temptations; that we may not be Proud. As God left the *Canaanites* among the *Jews*, to humble, and to try them; so doth he leave our Infirmities in us,
even

even when he gives us the Spirit of Promise, that he may make us sensible of our failings, and lay us in the dust under the sense of them; so that the setting of a Crown upon our heads, may be acknowledged to be an act of his free Grace, and that we may Triumph in the Name of God alone, who hath *concluded all under Sin, that he may have Mercy on all.* By reason of these Infirmities we are commanded to *Watch*; which is a plain argument, that we are still in *danger* of being assaulted, and our most treacherous Enemies may be those of our own Household. Now what we cannot *avoid*, by the Mercies of God we shall not be *accountable* for: But our Frailties and Infirmities, if they be *acknowledg'd*, and *be-wail'd*, and *prayed against*, and *strugled with*, are Pardoned of course; and every Man is *accepted according to that which he hath, and not according to that he hath not*, 2 Cor. 8. 12. Christianity is neither a soft Pillow for Wicked Men to sleep on, nor yet a weary yolk for Good Men to sink under; there being in the Gospel such an admirable mixture of the Promises with the Threats; that as a vicious Wretch has no reason to presume, so a Sincere and Humble hearted Man hath no reason

reason to *Despair*. *Thou Lord art Merciful*, saith the Psalmist ; *for thou rewardest every Man according to his Works* ; And it is the *usual* Course and Tenour of a Man's Life, that God doth judge of him by, making a great *abatement* for his Humane Infirmities ; and were it not thus, no Flesh living could be Saved ; because our present state of imperfection will not suffer us to be without *all manner* of blemish ; and he that boasteth of absolute Perfection, is not more a *Pharisee*, than a *Fool* ; because *in many things we are apt to offend all*. But every Sin grieveth not the good Spirit of God, nor is every Offence inconsistent with a State of Regeneration ; nor doth every little transgression dis-entitle us to the Divine Favour. The daily Sacrifice of the Heart in Prayer, and the constant striving with our manifold Infirmities, do so effectually Operate through the Merits of Christ, *who died even for weak ones*, that an Act of Frailty is not a Sin armed with a *Damning* Power. Though there be something of the Viper in us, yet as long as we do not *Cherish*, or *Indulge*, or keep it warm in our bosom, it cannot *Hurt*, however it may *fright* us, and create in us some trouble and *horror*. And so much be
spoken

spoken of Sins of *Infirmities*, and of those degrees of Repentance which are necessary for them.

CHAP. VII.

Of Wilful Sins.

I PROCEED next to Discourse of Sins of *Wilfulness*; that nothing may escape us which is necessary to be known, in order to a full understanding of that Repentance which is to be preparatory to the Holy Communion. Now *Wilful Sins* are such as are *Advisedly* and of *set purpose* committed; when a Man considerately doth this or that Evil action, either for his pleasure, or for his profit sake, or upon any other such unreasonable inducements. And these Sins are of two sorts, *Habitual*, or *Occasional*. *Habitual Sins* are such as are the general *Tenor* and *Course* of ones Life; which he *allows* himself in, and gives himself up to, and usually follows as his common Trade and *Way*. As, when ill Men *accustom* themselves to Prophane the Holy Name of God, or
addict

addict themselves to Drunkenness, or follow a Lascivious and lustful kind of Life; or make Fraud and Cheating a great part of their Trades; or live in Malice, and Uncharitableness, or whatever other sorts of Wickedness they suffer themselves to *Continue* in. *These* must needs be *Wilful* Habits, because it is impossible to conceive how any Man can persist in such Courses, having so much Time and Leisure to consider of them, and not give his full *consent* to such Impieties. For if it be said (though 'tis strange it should) that the Man may believe these things to be Lawful, and so Labour under an Erroneous Judgment, which allows him in such actions; yet it cannot be any thing but his own *Obstinacy* that *misleads* his Conscience into such an Errour, the Crime being so apparent to common Reason. Or, if he acts contrary to his judgment (which is most likely) it is a Sin against Conscience, which is the *Highest* aggravation any action is capable of: So that let him palliate it as he can, it is undoubtedly a *Wilful Habit*.

And because it is so, such a *Repentance* is necessary, as changeth the *whole frame* of his Heart and Life; such a Repentance, as makes a Man lay aside *utterly* every

every vicious *Custom*; such a Repentance, as effectually bends his Mind to an entire Practice of Virtue and Religion. For, the great business of Religion being to transform every one into the *Divine Image*, to make him Partaker of the *Divine Nature*, and to render him, according to the Capacities of Humane Nature, Holy and Pure as God himself is; and sorrow for what is past, being the first *Beginning* of such a God-like Life: That Repentance must needs be Trifling and Impertinent, which doth not powerfully carry on those Divine Purposes; and 'tis as impossible for one that persists in an Evil State and Course, to be a true Penitent at the same time, as it is to make Hell and Heaven meet together in one. Repentance is an High and Noble act of the Mind, that doth not lye in Sobs and Groans, nor meerly in the Anguish and Throws of a Spirit that is upon the Rack; for notwithstanding all this, Guilt and the Love of Sin may be at the bottom; and inward torment may proceed purely from a present apprehension of vengeance, which every Man would willingly avoid, though he delights in that which brings it upon him. No; Repentance that is genuine, works a total Change, turns the Desires towards the Glory of God, which

which is the True and Proper Object of the Mind, and so by degrees improves and raiseth up the depraved Nature of Man to those perfections which are in God, of whose Glory those Divine Graces, which Religion proposeth to our practice, are a *Copy and Transcript*.

INFINITELY distant from this, is the Life of that Man, who Loves to wallow in Vice, Sensuality, and Corruption. People of this sort and Temper, are so far from having a right to the Promises of Pardon and Peace, which are tendred by the Evangelical Covenant, and which are Sealed at the Holy Sacrament, that the Scripture plainly threatens *Indignation and Wrath, Tribulation and Anguish to every Soul that worketh Evil* after this manner; to such as obey *Unrighteousness*, to such as are the *Servants of Sin*, to such as let *Sin reign in their Mortal Bodies*, to such as *yield themselves up to Unrighteousness*, to such as make Provision for the *Flesh*, to such as obey it in the *Lusts thereof*, to such as *walk on in darkness*, and *lie in wickedness*; and conform themselves to this world; by all which Expressions, and many more to the same purpose, the Scripture meaneth such as continue and persist in an *Ungodly course*, in a crooked way, in a vicious *Manner and Habit of Life*. For which

which Reason, when Men intend to go to the Holy Communion, (where every one is sure to receive something, either Mercy, or Judgment to himself) they should take themselves to a very strict account, and impartially observe what that way is, wherein they are used to go: And if they find themselves so ill given, as that they willingly follow their own hearts Lusts, and resolve to do so still, in spite of God's Word, and the checks of their own Consciences, they must not in any wise present themselves at the Lord's Table, but utterly forbear, 'till they have truly humbled themselves under such a sense of their impieties, as worketh that Repentance which is the entrance upon a Life of Virtue, and True Religion. If there be not this Divine disposition of Soul in them, they are no more fit to receive the Body of Christ, than *Judas* that Betrayed him, or *Pilate* that Condemned him, or the *Jews* that Mock'd him, or the Souldier that stuck a Spear into his Side. And if he goes to the Holy Sacrament, while he goes on still in his wickedness, he doth but take a large step towards his own destruction. Such a one despiseth the Sufferings of the Son of God, tramples the Blood of the Covenant under his feet, and accounteth it an

Unholy

Unholy Thing, as if it were a refreshment for a Beast; and he is like one, that brings a Swine into the Sanctuary to feed upon the Bread of Eternal Life. Therefore, before we Celebrate so Great a Mystery, we are to enter into the strictest Engagements, to bind our Souls with the most serious Vows, and to set up very strong and powerful Resolutions of Amendment, lest in making too great haste to so Divine and Solemn an Ordinance, we make haste to Perish, and to be Undone. For nothing makes us capable, without Repentance from dead Works; as * *Justin Martyr* said. *The food at the Eucharist is not lawful to be received but by such as believe the Doctrines of Christianity to be true; and have been washed in the Laver of Regeneration, and lead their Lives according to Christ's Prescriptions.* * And he that ap-

* *Justin*
Mart.
Apol. 2.

* *Habentem adhuc voluntatem peccandi gravari magis dico Eucharistia percipione, quam purificari, S. Aug. de Eccles. Dogmar. c. 53.*

proacheth to the Lords Table with a Design and Purpose to Sin on still, instead of being refreshed and purified by receiving, is the more heavily Laden, and receives a Cup of Bitterness, instead of a Salutory Cordial.

Here a Question may arise, whether it be Lawful for one to Communicate upon serious *Vows* and *Resolutions* only? That

is, before he has tryed the strength and efficacy of them? For it is possible for a Man who has led a dissolute Life, to be through the piercing Power of the Word of God, struck so on a sudden into the Sense of his Guilt and Danger, as to resolve and undertake *presently* to forsake his Impieties. And perhaps too his outward circumstances may be such, that if he misse the opportunity he hath now before him, he may be in a very great danger of not meeting with another. In which particular case, I know no Reason sufficient to debar him from the use of this Ordinance, which effectually gives the Benefits of our Saviour's Passion to every true Penitent, as our Saviour himself gave them to that Thief upon the Cross, who was Converted in a moment. Indeed, where Men seem not to be straitened in their circumstances, but have probably time before them to make some Experiment of their Resolutions, it is very expedient for them to betake themselves to their Retirements, to weep bitterly, to observe what ground they are able to gain of their Habitual Vices, what Victory they get over their own Hearts, by suitable Acts of Mortification and Self-denial, which are necessary to be undertaken for the eradicating of inveterate Habits. By

K

these

these means they will afterwards come to the Blessed Sacrament with better advantage, because with more Comfort, with more Confidence and Peace of Mind, than such as have not made any *Tryal* of the firmness and stedfastness of their Vows and Resolutions. And yet I do not know, but even these may come with *Safety*; especially if (as I said) they find themselves straitned in their Circumstances, and verily believe their Resolution to be sincere in it self, and such as will be productive of Good Fruits. For all perseverance doth suppose a *Beginning*, and a continued State of Repentance is founded upon some foregoing *Acts*; and the very first act of Repentance begins and works in the *Mind*; so that if *that* be sincere and genuine, there is no doubt but 'tis very acceptable with God. But because the proof of this Sincerity depends upon Experience, and 'tis no easie thing, to skip in an instant from a course of Immorality, to a Life of Holiness, 'tis necessary for Men to use all possible means to approve themselves to God and their own Consciences, before they presume to Eat of this Bread, and to Drink of this Wine. And so much shall suffice to be spoken of Repentance, from such Sins as are habitual.

2. THE other sorts of *Wilful Sins*, I call *Occasional*; because they are not a settled Trade, but the *contingent* Effects of some *emergent* and *occasional* Temptation, which a foolish and negligent Wretch doth not exert his Strength and Courage to overcome, nor perhaps endeavours to resist, by Reason of some base advantages which are offer'd him upon his Wicked *Compliance*. A Man whose Life is unblameable in respect of its usual tenour and course, may fall in some single instances, and that deliberately; witness King *David*; whom the Scripture gives a great Character of as to the main; and yet we know how miserably he Sinned, first in the Case of *Bathsheba*, whose Embraces he longed after so passionately, though he knew the thing to have been most plainly forbidden by the express Law of God: And then in the Case of her Husband *Uriah*; a faithful Subject, that had so merited of him by the most Eminent Services; and yet nothing would satisfy *David* at last, but *Uriah's* Ruine; an horrible Sin against another express Law of God; and to aggravate it, a Sin which he brought about after the basest manner, by Disimulation, Hypocrisie, Perfidiousness, and in cold Blood too, and with all the Deliberation that usually attends such Politick but Bar-

barous Artifices. I call these *Wilful* occasional Wickednesses, because they were done with his Consent, and he became voluntarily Guilty of them upon some special Emergencies. And of the same Nature are those Wickednesses, which are acted by Persons, who are in other instances Men of a fair Reputation, and of tolerably good Consciences; and yet for some Carnal or Worldly ends, do basely yield themselves up by occasion of some Occurrences, to commit such Iniquities, as make the World to ring, and all but themselves to be asham'd of.

QUESTIONLESS such Sins as these, are both for the *Matter* and *Form* of them, of a very Criminal Nature, and a very deep Die, and therefore stand in need of a very deep Repentance, if God peradventure shall grant it, for the recovery of such Men out of the Snare of the Devil. For such Impieties as these, though but occasional ones, do strangely waste and make havock of the Conscience, make the Heart callous and crusty, are vocal and obdurate, crying aloud to Heaven for Vengeance, Grieve the Good Spirit of God, and if not thoroughly and timely retracted, by degrees *quench* him; they are horribly Scandalous to Religion, Injurious to the Interests of Mankind, and
because

because they are done deliberately and of set purpose, are very high Affronts and Contumelies to God himself. Nor will it mend the matter to pretend, that they do these things with a great deal of reluctancy; for it cannot be otherwise, if Men have any Sense of God and of their Duty, and have any thing of Conscience left them, that is not quite seared and past feeling. Conscience will recoil, though it be never so smother'd or drown'd; and the Sin the greater still, because acted against Conscience; the resistance of Conscience, argues the opposition against it, to be the stronger and the more violent, and consequently renders the act it self, the more Malicious and Deadly.

THEREFORE, before such Men presume to go to the Blessed Sacrament, it vastly concerns them to make their Peace with God, with their own Consciences, and with the World too, by a pungent and proportionable Repentance. For without this, their case is equally as bad and dangerous, as the most habitual Offenders; Repentance from dead works, being equally prescribed unto all. Nor will it be so much consider'd in the dreadful day of Judgment, who Sinn'd *oftnest*; for if a Man be an *hardned* Wretch, let his Sins be many or few, Habitual or Occasional,

his *Impenitence* must necessarily throw him into a place of Everlasting Torments.

NOW that Repentance for these occasional Wickednesses may be adequate and full, it must have, as I conceive, these following Qualifications, with which I shall conclude this Subject. 1. It must be as speedy as 'tis possible. For if notwithstanding the inward motions of God's Spirit, and the importunities of a Man's own Conscience, he puts his Repentance off, what is this but a plain *Approbation* of what he did? Which approbation *continuing*, the Sin becomes *Habitual*, though it was a *single act*, and though you suppose it to have been the *first* and *only* Sin of his whole Life; though it be not repeated, yet, not being Repented of, it is *Belov'd*, which is the same thing in God's Account, as if it were acted over and over again. For which Reason it cometh to pass by the just Judgment of God, that one Occasional Wickedness Unrepented of, doth sometimes by degrees and delay harden the Heart strangely, and emboldens the Man to go on; so that having once Violated his Conscience presumptuously, he sticks not to violate and wound it still. And thus one Wickedness draws on another: God delivering him up to himself,
for

for his first *Presumption* and subsequent *Impenitence*, the Wretch runs on headlong, till his Conscience proves Deaf, and his Case becomes very deplorable; like some obstinate Fools, that having made but one false step, pursue their Error, and trudge forward through thick and thin, having not the Heart to retreat, though there be a fatal Precipice before them: And thus the Man breaks his Neck in the end, and falls into Ruine, which at first he did not foresee, or suspect; and all by means of one Occasional Wickedness not retracted, not Repented of in time. 2. This Repentance ought to be not only speedy, but also *vigorous*, *extensive*, and *commensurate* to the Sin. For, as it was presumptuous in the Commission, so in respect of its *circumstances* and manifold Enormity, it may be exceeding sinful. Perhaps it was acted by one whose *Place*, *Office*, and *Dignity*, renders it the more open, the more foul, and the more *Infelicious*. Perhaps it was a *Complicated Sin*, against God, and against Men too; an Act of Impiety, and of Injustice and Oppression. Perhaps it was highly *Scandalous*, an encouragement to thousands of others to do the like, a great reproach to Religion, and that whereby the Word of God is Blasphemed or evil spoken of. A great many circum-

stances there are which may attend the Fact, to aggravate and heighten it; and accordingly the Malefactor's Repentance must bear a proportion to the several Branches into which it spreads. There are required great Humiliations and Terrors of Soul to implore God's Mercy; a deep remorse and anguish to propitiate his own Conscience, a thorough detestation of the Sin it self, many acts of self revenge for having complied with the Temptation; and if the Sin be injurious to others, all possible Reparation and Restitution must be made to the injur'd Party; for the Laws of God have equally provided for the interests of all men; and for an Oppressor, or any other Unjust Person to pretend sorrow without making amends for his Injustice, is the same thing as if he should Plunder and Sequester his Neighbour, and then say he Repents, though with the same Injustice he keeps at the same time the Mammon of Unrighteousness in his Clutches.

3. THERE is required also for all Wilful Occasional Transgressions, such a strong Repentance, as makes a Man to be very jealous of himself, to be very watchful and circumspect for the future; to stand strictly upon his Guard, to be afraid

fraid of the Temptation, to beware of coming near it, or near the occasion of it: Briefly, to give all Moral Diligence, that now he stands upon his Legs, and in the favour of God again, he may not fall the *Second* time. It is a dangerous thing to be within the reach of a Temptation, to be within the hearing of the Devil's Proposals. *All these Things will I give thee,* if in this single instance thou wilt resign up thy Conscience, and fall down and Worship me. 'Tis *dangerous*, I say, because in such a Case a Man is under a necessity, either to venture his ruine by Compliance, or to use his utmost Courage to Conquer the Temptation; which because many do not, but rather Exchange their Consciences, as a Price and Composition for some present advantages; therefore 'tis very necessary for such as did once make such a bad bargain, to keep hereafter out of harms way. For he that Loves the Temptation, cannot be supposed to dislike the Sin; but Sin he will again, even for a morsel of Bread, if he be but Solicited; and therefore that Repentance must needs be counterfeited and Hypocritical, when a Man is sorry only because he wants *Encouragements* to be wicked.

4. SUCH

4 SUCH Repentance is necessary, as is attended with a firm and sturdy *Resolution* to be truly Honest and Upright all the days of ones Life. Such an Obstinate and Manly Resolution is by the Grace of God sufficient alone to carry a Man safe out, through the midst of a thousand Dangers. For either he will not be Tempted at all, especially when the firmness of his Mind and Temper is discover'd, (the Devil himself will not easily throw away his Baits upon those he finds Inflexible) or else he will have Courage enough to resist all beginnings of Evil, lest by yielding, though it be but a little, he should be ensnared (as commonly Men are) into direct *Engagements* to Wickedness. It is a most dreadful thing to be *Engaged* to work Iniquity, to be under a sort of necessity to do it, and to be involved in guilt to that degree, as if he were forced as it were to go on further still, as if one had no other seeming Security but to push forward, and now to work that Iniquity with *Greediness*, which at first was only proposed to his *Choice*. Yet this is the Devil's way to make himself sure of Mens Partnership with him in his Torments; first to lead them into a willingness of submitting to his Conduct, and then, when once he has them

them under the whip-hand, to drive them into Perdition. And with none doth he so easily prevail, as with People of unresolved Minds, of mean, pliant, and easie Tempers; by means whereof, he drills them on into such a course of Impiety, that they know not well where or how to stay their foot. A Man of Resolution easily prevents this mischief, by generously resisting the very first appearances of Evil; nor would any be perswaded to act that to day, which yesterday he was Troubled at, and Repented of; did he but arm himself with a strong and powerful *Resolution* never to do so more.

TO these might be added several things more, to shew what Repentance that is to be, and to what degrees it must reach, which is necessary to recover a Man from the guilt and power, as well of all Habitual, as of all Occasional Sins that are deliberately committed. But I suppose what hath been said already is enough; and *the short* of the matter is *this*, that God delights in nothing more than in a Man's innocence; and if through Folly or Design a Man hath cast it away, he hath no other way left him, but as far as possibly he can, to *Regain* it by such a *Sincere, Universal, and Stedfast* Repentance,

penitance, as will be apt to make him live up to the Precepts of Christs Religion, and to express in some measure a resemblance of those Divine Perfections which are in God himself.

And never is this more necessary, than when we prepare for the Holy Communion, where the memory of Christs Suffering for Sin is Celebrated, where Pardon of Sin is solemnly prayed for; where that, and all other Benefits of our Saviour's Passion are verily and indeed offered, and where we profess to offer *and present our Selves, our Souls and Bodies, to be a Reasonable, Holy, and Lively Sacrifice unto God.*

'TIS not a few Trifles that can fit you for this Solemnity? 'Tis not going bare-foot, or lying upon the ground, or the putting on uneasy Apparel, or Scourging of the Flesh; 'tis not thumping of the Breast, or abstinence from certain sorts of Meat, or a few Sighs and Tears flowing from a little sense of Sin, and from a great fear of Hell; nay, 'tis not the Absolution of the Church (though that be a Sacred Thing, and where people are rightly disposed, an effectual Ministration, and such as we use too; 'tis not this neither) that can *prepare* you sufficiently for the Worthy eating of the Bread,

Bread, and drinking of the Cup, without a Broken Heart, without a Change of Mind, without full purpose and Resolution to mend your Lives, and to serve God in true Holiness and Righteousness all your days. For this is the true end and Scope of Christ's Religion, without the Practice whereof, all outward Observances are but sorry and empty Formalities; things which are very consistent with a Life of Sin (though that be the great thing which Christ came into the World, and dyed upon the Cross, that he might destroy) nor do I see by the Principles of some Men, how any of those External Rites can lay the least restraint upon our Vices and Lusts; but must be rather Encouragements to all manner of Sin and Wickedness; it being such a strong Temptation to Men to run presently upon a new Score, after the Sacrament is over; when they believe that all their accounts may be wiped out by those mean and easie methods, which reach not the Heart, nor meddle with Lusts, but let all manner of inward impurities alone, though those be the great things which God is angry at.

EXTERNAL Penance is one thing, but the Repentance of the Heart, and the Mortification of the Spirit is another, and

and a far different Matter; and that which infinitely more deserves our strictest regard; for it is the Original of a Divine Temper, and of a Life that is truly Christian. And I have been the more Copious in Discoursing upon it; not only because it is a necessary Preparative to this Heavenly Mystery, but also because it is the great business of our whole Life; 'tis the root of all Religion, out of which spring all those particular and various branches of Godliness, Righteousness, and Sobriety, which together make up the whole Duty of Man, and are the Genuine and Salutory Fruits of Repentance.

C H A P. VIII.

Of Charity.

I PROCEED next to the Subject of Charity; for that is another necessary Preparative; it being impossible for Men rightly to Celebrate the memorial of Gods infinite *Love to Them*, or to answer the Love of God in any due measure unless their own Souls be inflamed with an Unfeigned and Universal Love to those

those for whom *Christ dyed*. It is the Apostles own inference, 1 Joh. 4. 11. *Beloved, if God so Loved us, we ought also to Love one another*. In Discourſing upon this Point, I am to ſpeak, 1. Of the Nature; 2. Of the Exercife of Charity.

1. AS to its Nature; Charity is a Virtue of vaſt Extent and Latitude, ſo that St. Paul calls it *the fulfilling of the Law*, Rom. 13. Tho' the vulgar ſort are apt to reſtrain it to *Alms-deeds*; yet that is but one *Branch* of Charity, nay, when 'tis done out of *Oſtentation*, and for Popular applauſe, it loſeth the Reward, and deſerves not the very *Name* of Charity, as we find by the Apoſtle, where he tells us, that *though I beſtow all my goods to feed the Poor, yet if I have not Charity, it profiteth me nothing*, 1 Cor. 13. In which Chapter, we have a large deſcription of Charity, that it *suffereth long, and is kind*, that it *Envieth not*, that it *vaunteth not it ſelf*, that it is *not puffed up*, that it *behaveth not it ſelf unſeemly*, that it *ſeeketh not her own*, that it is *not eaſily provoked*, that it *thinketh no evil*, that it *rejoyceth not in iniquity*, but *rejoyceth in the Truth*; that it *beareth all Things, believeth all Things, hopeth all Things, endureth all Things*. By which ſeveral Expreſſions is meant, that true Charity hath ſuch an Universal influence
upon

upon a Man's Mind, that it creates in him an entire Goodness and Loveliness of Nature, and restrains him from every thing that is either inhumane, or injurious, or unbecoming the temper of one that professeth himself a Disciple of the Meek, Humble, and Beneficent Jesus. Therefore before you go to the Lord's Table, you should examine and look into your Temper, and endeavour to rectifie it, wherever any crookedness appears, wherever it crosseth the Christian Law, wherever it swerves from that Divine Nature and Spirit which was in the great Exemplar of Charity. People that are impatient of every little provocation; that are rough, uncompassionate, insensible of other Men's Miseries; that begrudge any good which the providence of God casteth into their Neighbour's bosome; that out of a Towing and Lofty Conceit of their own Merits, look contemptuously and spitefully down upon their Brethren; that are intractable, disorderly, and pursue only their own private satisfaction; that are full of rancour and malice; that employ their minds upon wicked and mischievous Contrivances; that take pleasure in the Sins or Frailties of others; that instead of covering and concealing them, spread the infamy

famy of them abroad, and proclaim them as it were from the House top; that are prone to believe any thing that is Evil of those they have no kindness for; to judge the worst of them, to turn every thing they do to a hard Construction, and to treat them so as if they were no other than Reprobates, and Cast-aways: People I say, of this harsh and sower disposition, should new-mould their Tempers before they come to the Supper of the Lamb, which was Meek, Innocent, and Spotless, and which readily offer'd up himself a Sacrifice and Atonement for the Crimes of the whole World. *Purge out therefore the old Leaven, saith the Apostle, that ye may be a new Lump; for even Christ our Paschever is Sacrificed for us; therefore let us keep the Feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of Malice and Wickedness, but with the unleavened Bread of Purity and Truth, 1 Cor. 5. 7, 8.*

But there are two special acts of Charity, which I am more particularly to speak of, because there are at this Solemnity some *Special Reasons* for them; some special Considerations to stir us up to the exercise of them, and to single them out particularly from the rest; and

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they are. 1. *Liberality to the Poor.* 2. *Fraternal Forgiveness.*

I. FOR Liberality to the Poor. * The Old *Heathens* themselves, especially the *Greeks*, were wont at their *Sacrificial Banquets* to remember their absent *Friends*, and to send them portions of the *Sacrifices*. † The like Custom was in the *Christian Churches*,

* *Gyrald Syndagm.*
c. 17: *Alex. ab Alex.*
lib. 4. c. 17. & *multi*
alii.

† *Justin Martyr*,
Apol. 2.

(as *Justin Martyr* tells us) in the very next Age to the *Apostles*, of sending some of the *Consecrated Bread* and *Wine* to such *Christians* as were absent; which makes me still believe, that the *Primitive Christians* look'd upon this *Sacred Solemnity* as *Analogous* to those *Sacrificial Feasts* which had been used all the *World* over. In this there seems to be a great difference; that among the *Pagans* distribution was made to their *Friends* and *Relations* only; whereas the *Charity* of *Christ's Disciples* was not limited, but extended unto *all* that were necessitous, though they were more especially regarded, who were of the *Household of Faith*.

THIS kind of *Charity* to our *Fellow-Creatures*, God who extendeth his *Mercies* to all his works, hath still required of *Mankind*, and more abundantly since he hath sent his *Son* to us, which was the

the most Eminent instance of his own sincere Love and Goodness to the whole World. How many *Commands* do we find in the New Testament, *to be Merciful, as our Heavenly Father is Merciful; to lay up our Treasures in Heaven; to do Good; to be ready to give; to be glad to distribute; to be Rich in good works, and the like?* But at the Blessed Eucharist we are more especially concern'd to be mindful of this matter, because there are more especial Considerations to excite us to it; for here we commemorate the Charity of the Lord Jesus Christ, that *though he was Rich, yet for our sakes he became Poor, that we through his Poverty might be Rich, as the Apostle speaks, 2 Cor. 8. 9.* Here we see how he parted with his Heart-blood, and laid down his very Life for us. And here he feeds us with Food from Heaven, with that Divine and Spiritual nourishment, whereof the Manna in the Wilderness was a poor *Type* and *Figure*; with the true Bread of Life; with his Flesh which is *Meat indeed*, and with his Blood which is *drink indeed*; more strengthening than the Manna, more efficacious, more durable; for he that partaketh hereof shall *Live for ever.*

2. THESE Considerations do of themselves Naturally tend to stir us all up to

these acts of Mercy and Charity at this time. A thing so Universally, so Constantly observed by all Christian Churches since the beginning of Christianity, that we cannot shew any one Age when this Blessed Sacrament was ever administred without it; perhaps it is the only Ecclesiastical Right, which hath come down to us without any contradiction; and because the thing may be of some considerable use and satisfaction, I shall give this short account of it.

OUR Saviour in his Sermon on the Mount had said, *If thou bring thy Gift to the Altar, and there remembrest that thy Brother hath ought against thee, leave there thy Gift before the Altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy Brother, and then come and offer thy Gift*, Mat. 5. 23, 24. The Primitive Christians understood these words to have been spoken by way of Anticipation, with respect to that Charity which all were to express at this Sacrament. * Because all Legal Sacrifices were now in a short time utterly to cease; they could not conceive why our Saviour should prescribe a *New Right and Duty* to be used at the presenting of the *Mosaical Oblations*, and that in a Sermon which he purposely intended for the perpetual and standing use of his own Church;

* See Mr. Mead's Learned Discourse of the Altar.

Church; and therefore they lookt upon it as a standing Law, which he gave occasionally, and *before-hand*, to oblige all his Followers to acts of Charity, especially when they come to his own Table. Hereupon arose two Customs, which all Christians universally observed in the Primitive Ages, and which had no other plain Text of Scripture in all the New Testament to warrant them, but this Text only. One was in token of their mutual *Reconciliation* and sincere Love, for as they were going to Celebrate this Divine Mystery, the Deacon cryed aloud to this purpose, *Μη τις ἔχῃ τινος*, *Let no Man have a quarrel against any*; whereupon the Devout Communicants presently Saluted one another with an *Holy Kiss*. The other Custom was what I am now speaking of, of providing for the necessities of the Poor. None came before the Altar with empty hands, but every one according to his abilities brought something to be offer'd upon the Holy Table for the use of their indigent Brethren; part of the Offerings being first Consecrated for the Celebration of the present Solemnity; and these they called *ἁγία δῶρεα*, *Holy Gifts*, according to our Saviour's Language.

WHICH Custom was undoubtedly observed even in the Apostles time; as you may see by these Proofs. 1. First saith *St. Paul, upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, 1 Cor. 16. 2.* Though the Apostle here spake directly and chiefly of a special Collection which was then to be made for the poor Christians in *Judea*, yet because he directed the *Corinthians* to lay by something in store upon the *first day* of the week, the day on which the Holy Sacrament was constantly administred in the Apostles time, it seems highly propable that *St. Paul* spake of an *Accumulation* of Charity, over and above the ordinary proportion which they were wont on that day to present before the Lord's Table.

2. BUT there is another passage of *St. Paul's*, and that in the very same Epistle to the *Corinthians*, which puts the thing out of all Controversie; 1 Cor. 11. 20, 21, 22. *When ye come together in one place, this is not to eat the Lord's Supper; for in eating every one taketh before other his own Supper, and one is Hungry, and another is Drunken. What, have ye not Houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the Church of God? and shame them that have not?* Here the Apostle expressly speaks of eating the Lord's

Lord's Supper, and that in the Church, the *Place* of Publick Religious Assemblies, which he plainly distinguisheth from their *Private House*; and he blames them for those Disorders, and profane extravagancies they committed in the Church at that time; and I will represent the Case in the words of our Learned and Incomparable Paraphrast Dr. *Hammond*. Those Publick Common Meetings which should have been as at the Table of the Lord, to eat a Church-meal, a common Christian Feast, were made by those Corinthians much otherwise, none of that Communicativeness and Charity was among them, as was required in Such. For at their Feasts of Charity, accompanying, the Lord's Supper, which were intended for the relief of the Poor, and wherein all the Guests were to be equal, no Man to take place, or eat before another, no Man to pretend any right to what he brought, but every Man to contribute to the common Table, and to eat in common with all others; this Custom was utterly broken among them, he that brought a great deal, fell to that, as if it were in his own House, at his own meal, and so fed to the full; whereas another, which was not able to bring so much, was fain to go hungry home; and so their Meetings were more to fed themselves, than to practice a piece of Christian Cha-

rity, to which those Sacramental Assemblies were instituted. This certainly was to do as they were wont at home, and they might as well have stayed there, as have done thus; this was quite contrary to the institution of Church-Meetings, and not only to send away hungry, but even to Reproach and put to shame those that were in want, and were not able to bring any great offering along with them.

HENCE it appears, that the Regular way of Celebrating the Eucharist in the Apostles days, was for all men, especially for the Rich and Wealthy sort, to bring liberal Oblations with them to the Church to relieve the Poor, and upon part of those Oblations to feed together, with that Humility, Impartiality, and Communicativeness of affliction, which became a Family whereof the tender-hearted Jesus is the Head.

3. AND to confirm this thing further, it is observable, that these Feasts which accompanied the Holy Sacrament were called *Agapæ*, or *Feasts of Love*; and St. Jude makes express mention of them at the 12. verse of his Epistle, where speaking of the lewd *Gnosticks*, he saith, *These are Spots*, ἐν ταῖς ἀγάπαις ὑμῶν, *in your Feasts of Charity*. And the same sort of Feast seems to be meant by St. Luke, Act.

Act. 2. 46. for having told us of the first Apostles, that they *continued daily in the Temple*, that is, at the ordinary Service, and Worship, used by the Jews: He mentions next their retiring afterwards to some of the upper Rooms about the Temple to celebrate Christian Eucharist; there they *brake Bread*, and *did eat their Meat with gladness and singleness of Heart*, with that Simplicity and Liberality which became them.

AT first, the Celebration of the Sacrament followed these Feasts of Charity, and came at the close of all; Herein Christians follow the Example of our Saviour, who instituted the Eucharist at the end of his last Supper: But because some were disorderly at these Solemnities, and brought a Scandal upon Religion by their *Excess* and *Intemperance*, in process of time this Custom was alter'd; and Christians were wont to receive the Sacrament *Fasting*, and then they proceeded to the *Love-Feast* upon some *Remains* of the Offerings. But the former Abuses continuing still, those *Feasts* too, were at last wholly laid aside; because what was intended for purposes of Charity, was perverted to Riot and Excess, by the extravagant and ungovernable Liberty which some ill Men took, to whom St. Peter points, *2 Pet. 2. 13.*

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These are Spots and Blemishes : (Agreeable to St. Jude's Character of them) Sporting (or Rioting) in their Agape, while they Feast with you. For so the places should be rendred; as the Learned Grotius and others have observed; the Scribe by an easie mistake having put ἀγάπας deccivings, for ἀγάπαις, or Feasts of Charity and Love.

HOWEVER, both before and after the Abolition of those Banquets, liberal Oblations were still made at the Sacrament for the support of the Ministry and the Poor. And *Justin Martyr* in the very next Age to the Apostles, gives us this Account of it: **That the Faithful having ended their usual Prayers, and saluted each other with a kiss, they offer'd to the Chief Minister Bread, Wine, and Water, which he receiving at their hands, offer'd to God with large Praises and Thanksgivings for their enjoyment of his Creatures; to all which the whole Congregation devoutly said, Amen. This Thanksgiving being ended, distribution was made of those things over which those Solemn Thanks had been given; every Communicant had a share, and some of the Oblations were by the Deacons carried to such as were absent. But, saith Justin Martyr, they that were Wealthy and Liberal, gave every Man what*

* Apol. 2.

what he would according to his own Pleasure: And the Collection was committed into the hands of the Chief Minister, who relieved out of it Orphans, and Widows, those that were sick, and those that were in want upon any other account, Prisoners, Strangers, and in short, all that were in necessity.

THE Primitive Christians, though they knew themselves to have been discharged from their Mosaical Ordinances, and consequently not bound to offer any Bloody Sacrifices, or other Oblations that were *Types* and *Figures* of our Saviour; yet they look'd upon some Oblations as Expressions of a *Moral Duty*, as acknowledgements of God's *Soveraignty* over all things, as Expressions of *Honour* and *Gratitude* to him, and as necessary Acts of Charity to his poor Creatures. And thus we are told by St. Irenæus, who was but one remove from the times of the Apostles: **The Oblation of the Church*, *Iren. Lib. which the Lord would have to be offered 4. c. 34. in the whole World, is reputed by God a pure Sacrifice, and accepted by him; not that he stands in need of any Sacrifice from us, but because the advantage of it redounds to the Offerer, when his Gift is accepted; for a Gift to a King is an Expression of Honour and Affection; which our Lord, willing that we should offer in Simplicity and Innocence,

cence, said, when thou bringest thy Gift to the Altar, and there remembreſt that thy Brother hath ought againſt thee: leave there thy Gift before the Altar, and go thy way, firſt be reconciled to thy Brother, and then come and offer thy Gift. Therefore, ſaith Irenæus, We are to offer unto God the firſt Fruits of his Creatures; even as the Law ſaid, Thou ſhalt not appear before thy God empty. And 'tis not Oblations in General that is forbidden; no, there were Oblations among the Jews, and there are Oblations among us; there were Sacrifices at the Temple, and there are Sacrifices in the Church; it is only the kind of Sacrifices and Oblations that is changed. Therefore it behoveth us to make an Oblation, that we may ſhew our Gratitude and Thankfulneſs to God the maker of all things, with a pure Mind, with Faith unfeigned, with a firm Hope, with fervent Love, offering unto him the firſt Fruits of thoſe Creatures which are his own.

S. Cyp. de
oper. & e-
leem. p.
203 edit.
Oxon.

Therefore St. Cyprian ſeverely reprehended a rich Widow for coming to the Sacrament without bringing ſomething to the common Treafure, and for eating of that Sacrifice which the poor had offered, without preſenting any Sacrifice of her own.

SEVERAL more Testimonies might be produced were it needful; but thoſe are enough to ſhew that in the firſt and pureſt
ages

ages of Christianity, the Celebration of the Eucharist was constantly attended with Oblations, first to be offer'd unto God as an humble and grateful acknowledgement that he is the great Lord of all, and then to be applied as necessary and charitable Provisions for the uses of the Church, and especially for the substance of the Poor.

HENCE it is, that we read so often in the Ancients of *Offering* and *Sacrificing*, and the like; by which expressions they meant, not any new and real Sacrificing of Christ by the hands of the Priest, as some would make us believe; for the Primitive Christians did not look upon the Eucharist as such a formal Sacrifice, but only as a *Commemoration* of that Sacrifice which Christ only for all offer'd upon the Cross: but by Sacrificing they meant, partly the offering up of the joint Devotion of the whole Congregation, their Prayers, and Praises, which are the Spiritual Sacrifices of the Heart, and partly also the Alms of the Congregation, which they first offered to the Priest, and he presented and laid upon the Table; these were their Sacrifices; and so they are expressly called by St. Paul himself, *Heb. 13. 16. To do good, and to communicate forget not, for with such Sacrifices God is well pleased.*

And

See Mr.
Mede's
discourse
upon this
point.

And hence also the Ancients familiarly called the Communion-Table the *Altar*; a word, which in all likelihood, they borrowed of Christ out of that forementioned place of Scripture, whence they took the thing, the Rite of Oblations. That the Primitive Professors of our Religion commonly used the *Word*, is abundantly evident out of the most ancient Writers, *Ignatius, Tertullian, St. Cyprian*, the other Apostolical Canons, and a great many Testimonies more. And though contentions about words are trifles, yet to speak freely, I see no just exception against the use of this word, as long as we use it in the genuine sense of the Antient Christians: For they called it an *Altar*, not upon this supposition, as if the true Natural Body of Christ were really offer'd upon it, and that too, as a propitiation for the Sins of the Living and the Dead; no, neither was any such Corporal Presence, or any such Oblation either believed, or so much as dreamt of by the Church for several hundred years after the beginning of Christianity. But so they stiled it, perhaps because the Death of Christ is *Commemorated*, and *Announced* Solemnly at the Table; but most plainly, because the Congregation of Communicants did gather themselves to it, *to call upon God,*
and

and to present their *Alms* to be laid upon the Table, and this, not only for the more easie Celebration of the Eucharist, but as a decent signification too, that whether they prayed, whether they gave Thanks, or whether they offered Alms, they did all to the Glory of Christ, and in the name of Christ, the Memorial of whose Death was celebrated *there*; and because these Prayers, these Praises, these Alms were called *Sacrifices* and *Oblations*, therefore was the Table it self, at which they were offered, called an Altar.

TO conclude this point now. I think enough hath been said concerning this Branch of Charity, at the Holy Communion, which consisteth in shewing Mercy and Liberality to the Indigent, especially to those who have the same Faith, and the same Hope with us. You see what special Reasons there are to excite you to it at this great Solemnity, and how Ancient, Constant, and Uniform, the practice of all Christians hath still been as to this particular; which I was the more willing to shew, because Examples commonly are very operative; and I am sure, Ancienter, Nobler, Better grounded Examples, we cannot have of any Christian Office that is required at our hands.

C H A P.

C H A P. IX.

Of Brotherly Forgiveness.

2. **I** Proceed now to the consideration of the other Branch of Christian Charity, which consisteth in *Fraternal Forgiveness*. In discoursing upon this, I am to shew. 1. What is meant by Fraternal Forgiveness. 2. How necessary it is when we come to the Lord's Table. 3. How this matter is to be made practical.

1. First then, Fraternal Forgiveness, as it is required and stated by the great Law of Christ, consisteth in two things. 1. In laying aside all Desires and Intentions of *pure Revenge*. This the Scripture calls, *rendering of Evil for Evil*; when an injur'd Person punisheth the Offenders, not for any ends of *Charity* or *Justice*, but meerly for Punishment *sake*, because he delights in his Sufferings, and seeks only to satisfy a provoked and distemper'd Passion. For the clearing up of this, because it is a very material point, we must note, that when an Injury is committed, either against ones Person, or Interest, or good Name, one or other of these three things is

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apt to follow, between which we must carefully distinguish; either *Discipline*, or *Reparation*, or *Revenge*. Discipline is, when the Offender is made to undergo Rebuke, or Shame, or Smart; and this, for his own *Correction* and future *Amendment*. Now the end of this, being nothing but *Charity*, or the doing of an Offender *Good*, it is not only very consistent with, but very agreeable unto the Law of Christ: And so you Read it, St. *Matth.* 18. 15, 16, 17. *If thy Brother shall Trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy Brother: But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church: But if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an Heathen Man, and a Publican.* Reparation is, when an Offender is punished in his *Fortunes*, for the making up of that loss or damage, which by the Injury his Brother sustains. Now the end of this being nothing but *Justice*, it is very consistent also with the standing Laws of Christianity, that every Man must provide for his own, that we must live Righteously in this World, and that he that doth wrong, shall receive for the wrong that he

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hath

hath done, Col. 3. 25. But pure *Revenge* is, when a Man is punisht, not out of any good intentions to *himself*, nor out of hopes of *Repairing* the injur'd Man's Losses, but only to retaliate one Act of Hostility with another, thereby to satisfy his *Hatred and Anger*. As for instance; a Man wilfully strikes out *thine* Eye, and to recompence the blow, thou strikest out his too; this is properly *Revenge*; here his Eye doth not make Amends or Reparation for the loss of thine. Therefore the end of this being nothing but to hurt another, and to satiate a Brutish Appetite by inflicting Punishments, that are both Uncharitable and Impertinent, and that have nothing to be pretended for them, but an inhumane Pleasure in doing Mischief, it is utterly repugnant to his Religion, whose business in the World was *to go about doing good*, and to teach all his Followers to do the same. *Ye have heard* (saith our Saviour) *that it hath been said, an Eye for an Eye, and a Tooth for a Tooth: but I say unto you, that ye resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right Cheek, turn to him the other also*, Mat. 5. 38, 39. That is, rather than return Injury for Injury, be contented to receive another. Though God by his right of absolute Sovereignty over all, may punish obdurate Wretches

to shew his wrath and power; especially when there are no hopes of amendment; yet we poor Creatures, who stand upon the same level, and are all of us a-kin on *Adam's side*, ought ever to propose to our selves some Charitable ends in our proceeding with one another, not recompensing any Man *Evil for Evil*; not *avenging our selves*, but rather giving place unto wrath; because it is written, *vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord*, Rom. 12. 17, 19. This is one part of Fraternal Forgiveness, to slight all that is past, without strict Retaliation, to void our minds of all malicious intentions, and not to think of any Punishments which are not required by the Rules of Charity, or common *Justice*; of which Cases I shall speak by and by.

2. FRATERNAL Forgiveness must rise higher yet; and that it may fully answer its measures in the Gospel, it must consist in doing an Enemy *Good* too. This is the perfection, and the most perfect expression of it; instead of Hurting after a revengeful manner, to Help, to Succour, and to Intreat kindly every one, whoever he be that hath offended us. And this is that new sort of Patience;

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* *Novam planè patientiam docet Christus, &c. Tertul. adv. Marcion, l. 4.*

Of Brotherly Forgiveness.

which Christ hath taught his Disciples, saith * *Tertullian* ; to do good unto all Men without distinction or limitation. Even the Old Law required the *Jews* not to hate *their Brethren in their hearts*, Levit. 19. 17. Nay, it required them to do friendly Offices to one another, although there were enmity between them, as we find, *Exod. 22. 4, 5. If thou meet thine Enemies Ox or his Ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again, &c.* But all this was meant with peculiar respect to their own Tribes and Countreymen ; for other Nations they were permitted to hate, and in many Cases were bound to treat them after an hostile manner. But Christ's Religion carries a far different Spirit with it. A Christian is bound to look upon every Child of *Adam* as his Neighbour, though an Enemy even to the Faith, though without Christ, though an alien from the Commonwealth of *Israel* ; and consequently he is obliged not only to abhor all malicious Designs against him, but moreover to extend the utmost of his Charity unto him, like the common Maker and Father of us all, whose mercy is over all his Works. *Ye have heard* (saith Christ) *Mat. 5. That it hath been said, thou shalt love thy Neighbour, and hate*

hate thine Enemy; But I say unto you, love your Enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you; that you may be the Children of your Father which is in Heaven; for he maketh his Sun to rise on the Evil, and on the Good, and sendeth rain on the Just, and Unjust. For if ye love them only which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the Publicans the same? And if ye Salute your Brethren only, what do you more than others? Do not even the Publicans so? Alas, this comes infinitely short of the boundless and most generous Spirit of Christianity; which teacheth us, not to be overcome by Evil, but to overcome Evil with Good; if an Enemy hunger, to feed him, if he thirst, to give him drink; and by so doing, to heap coals of fire upon his head; to melt and intender his Spirit, instead of calling for fire from Heaven to consume him, as those Disciples would have done upon the heads of the Samaritans, who knew not what Sweetness and Charity the Christians Spirit is of.

2. **THUS** you see the nature of that Charity, which consisteth in Fraternal Forgiveness, in its full Latitude and Extent. To come closer to our purpose yet,

let us now in the next place consider the particular necessity of this thing when we Celebrate this Divine Mystery. *Forgive us our Trespases as we forgive them that Trespase against us*, is a Prayer we use daily by our Lord's own directions; and thereby we are taught, that Charity is always to be mixt with our Devotion, and that we should pity the necessity of others Souls, as often as we call for mercy upon our own. But, as I have already shewn you, there are at this great Solemnity *Special* and *Peculiar* Reasons to to actuate, not only our Faith and Repentance, but our *Charity* too, in its several Parts and Properties; and therefore laying aside at present the Consideration of those *General* Obligations which are derived from the Commands of Christ, that were given on other Occasions; I shall take notice only of those *special* Reasons, which have a more peculiar influence upon our minds, from the Consideration of this *Mystery*.

IF thou bring thy Gift to the Altar, and there remembrest that thy Brother hath ought against thee, leave there thy Gift before the Altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy Brother, and then come and offer thy Gift, Matth. 5. 23, 24. It was this place of Scripture which gave occasion

occasion to the Primitive Christians to call the Lord's Table an *Altar*, and just as they went about to offer up their Sacrifices of Prayer, Praises, and Alms-deeds, to express their Reconciliation and perfect Love, by Saluting each other with an Holy Kiss, the Deacon having called out unto them, *μη τις κατα τινος*, let none have ought against another. The peculiar Reasons of this Charity, may be drawn from these 4 Considerations.

I. FROM the Consideration of that Analogy, which this Christian Feast bears to the Sacrificial Banquets of old, to which this Banquet doth in some measure correspond. * The

Heathens themselves were wont at those Solemnities to give over all Strifes and Controversies, and to release such miserable Creatures as were in Prisons and Bonds.

* *Illud autem observatum ab antiquis videmus, ut quoties Supplicationes aut lectiones indicerentur, a jurgiis & litibus abstinerent, & vinculis vincula demerent.* Gyrald. Syntag. 17. page 482.

By the common light of Nature, they found it necessary for them all to appear before God with Calm and Unpassionate Minds, to testify their freedom from soweriness and rancour, by expressions of Humanity, and Forgiveness; so that their Religious Feasts seem'd to resemble that *Charistia*, which *Valerius Maximus* speaks of, a *Feast of Love* and entire Friendship.

I do not speak this to lessen the Dignity of this *Christian* Eucharist, but to shew, that if they made it a great part of their Religion to be thus dispos'd, who wanted the assistance of Divine Revelation, and fed only upon Ritual and mean Entertainments, which the Custom of Nations had made every where common; certainly the Noblest acts of Charity must be required of us, who have been so often told of the infinite Love of God to us, and have the singular Honour and Happiness to feed together upon that Lamb of God, which was Sacrificed for the forgiveness of the whole World.

2. HERE we Celebrate the Memorial of our Saviour's Sufferings; who refused not to be kist by the impurest lips in the World, even when he knew that *Judas* his own Disciple, his Almoner, came to betray him; who called him by no harder Name than *Friend*; who healed the Officers Ear which had been cut off by the rash zeal of another Disciple; who held his peace, though oppress'd at his Tryal with false accusations; who took no notice of the rudeness of their malice, when his implacable Enemies spit upon him, buffeted him, smote him on the face with their hands, that wanted nothing but to be embrewed in his Blood; who for-
gave

gave *Peter*, though he had Apostatiz'd, and flatly denyed him with Oaths and Imprecations; who pityed not himself, but those poor People that followed him with tears to his Crucifixion, and used that soft expression to them, *Daughters of Jerusalem weep not for me, but weep for your selves, and for your Children*; who was led as a *Lamb to the Slaughter*, and as a *Sheep that before his Shearers is dumb*, who when he was reviled, reviled not again, and when he suffered, threatned not; but closed up his Life with a most *Charitable Prayer* for his Enemies forgiveness; in a word, who throughout this whole affair behaved himself with the most eminent Candour, Meekness, Goodness, and Clemency that was possible, for him to express; and all this, that he might leave us an *Example that we should follow his steps*, saith the Apostle, *1 Pet.*

2. 21. Now when we see at this Memorial of that Great Sacrifice, the Bread broken, and the Wine poured out, the one representing the bruising of his Flesh, the other the pouring out of his Blood, both shewing how he was smitten of God, and afflicted; when we see this, and call to mind his Exemplary Patience and Charity throughout all his Sufferings; what can we gather hence, but these natural

tural thoughts, that we should be like-minded; that Christ our Passover having been thus Sacrificed for us, we should keep this Feast without the Old Leaven, and without the Leaven of Malice and Wickedness; that we should put on as the Elect of God, Bowels of Mercy, Kindness, and Humbleness of Mind; that all Bitterness, and Wrath, and Anger, and Clamour, and Evil Speaking should be put away from us, with all Malice; and that we should be kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven us, and as Christ for his Mercy sake forgave his very Murtherers.

3. AT this Great Solemnity, there is not only a Spiritual Union between Christ, and all good Christians, but a Representation also of that perfect Union which ought to be among Christians themselves. That one Loaf that is made up of many Grains all moulded together into one Lump; and that Cup that is made up of many drops all mixed together into one Mass, shew that all who participate of these Symbols should be joyned together into one Society, a Society animated with one and the same Spirit, a Society knit together by the Band of one Discipline, a Society of one Heart, and of one Mind, as well as of one Faith, and Hope. Many of the *Ancients* insist much upon this, that the

the Holy Sacrament is a Figure, both of that *Natural* Body of Christ which Suffered upon the Cross, and moreover of that *Mystical* Body of Christ, of which he was made the Head after his Resurrection : And one Reason of that Unity which ought to be among the several Members of this Body is, because they are all fed and nourisht at one Table; and so *St. Paul* himself tells us, that *we being many are one Bread, and one Body, because we are all partakers of that one Bread* (or Loaf) *1 Cor. 10. 17.* This then is another peculiar Reason, why we should appear at this Solemnity, a New, and unleavened lump, with Minds purged from all ferment of Malice and Wickedness, like Children of the same Father, and of one Family round about his Table, with Souls full of the most extensive and unfeigned Charity, and with Spirits enflamed with the Love of God, and with Love to all that belong to God; the true Spiritual Incense which gives a sweet smelling Savour to all our Offerings at the Altar. *I beseech you, Brethren,* (saith *St. Paul* in the beginning of that Epistle, wherein he taxed afterwards the disorders of the *Corinthians* at the holy Communion, *I beseech you, Brethren*) *by the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you: but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same*
Mind,

Mind, and in the same Judgment, I Cor. I. 10.

4. TO this Solemnity we come to receive the pledges of our reconciliation unto God, the Ratification and Seal of our own Pardon and Forgiveness. *This* (saith our Saviour, speaking of the Creature we are to drink, of the Fruit of the Vine, as 'tis expressly called in the very next verse, this) *is my Blood*, or the Communion of my Blood *of the new Covenant, which is shed for many, for the remission of Sins*, Mat. 26. 28. But how can we expect to be pardoned our selves, if we do not let all Hatreds and Animosities drop to the ground before we go unto the Altar? If we do not freely, heartily, and sincerely pardon all others, as we our selves would be pardoned? *If ye forgive Men their Trespases, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not Men their Trespases, neither will your Heavenly Father forgive your Trespases*; saith our blessed Lord, Mat. 6. 14, 15. Whence it is clear, that mutual Charity is one of those many conditions which are necessary to make us capable and receptive of God's Mercy. As when *Christ* gave the Keys of his Kingdom to *Peter*, he intended all the other Apostles should have an equal share of the Authority; and to this purpose, he said afterwards to all the Apostles, when he breathed on them, *Whose soever Sins ye remit,*

*Petro soli
claves de-
dit, ceteris
communi-
candas. Op-
* . tal.*

remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever Sins ye retain, they are retained, Joh. 20. 23. So, where pardon of Sin is promised to this or that *Grace*, there all other Graces are taken in, and supposed, because there is required a *Complication* of all Virtues in order to perfect Remission. Now of these Virtues, mutual *Charity*, or our forgiving each other, is *one*. Not that it procures our forgiveness by way of *Merit* (take heed of that conceit, so vain in it self, so deadly in its consequences, so reproachful to the free Grace of God, and to the infinite Merits of our Redeemer) but that this mutual Charity doth *dispose*, *qualifie*, and *fit* us for God's pardon. Therefore 'tis observable, that when our Lord gave his Church a Form of Prayer of his own composing, and in it taught us to pray; *Forgive us our Trespases, as we forgive them that Trespase against us*. As soon as ever he had ended that Prayer, he presently singled out this part of it to speak to, inculcating and reasoning upon this sole point of fraternal forgiveness, as being a point of such great Moment and Weight, that without the practice of it, the rest of the Prayer would be to little or no purpose. And to strengthen the necessity of this thing farther yet, he spake of it again afterwards, *Matth. 18.* where we find a Parable of a wicked

wicked Servant, to whom his Lord forgave a Debt of ten thousand Talents; but because upon his forgiveness, he dealt unmercifully with his Fellow-Servant, taking him by the Throat, and casting him into Prison for an hundred Pence, his Lord was very wroth with him, saying, *O thou wicked Servant, shouldest not thou have had Compassion on thy Fellow Servant, even as I had pity upon thee?* And so he delivered him to the Tormenters, till he should pay all that was due unto him. The Application of all wick is very plain, but very terrible; *so likewise shall my Heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your Hearts forgive not every one his Brother their Trespases*, Mat. 18. 35.

3. TO draw now to a Conclusion, and to bring down this whole Matter closer yet to our Christian Practice. Let Charity and perfect Love be at once both the Rule and the Tenor of our whole Life in all Instances and Occurrences. Whatever Objections against our Religion are wont to be made by some (who yet of all Mankind are most to be blamed for their Uncharitableness) let us never give them occasion to lay this blame upon our *Manners* (though it doth not so much as touch our Profession it self) that a Spirit of Strife and Hatred is among us. But
when

when we are about to Celebrate the blessed Eucharist, then especially we should consider the Angels Doxology, and prepare our Minds so that we may use it with enlarged and devout Hearts, *Glory be to God on high, on Earth Peace, good will towards Men.* Then all undue Heats that by any Emergency may have been raised, should vanish away from us like Smoak; then we should put on, *as the Elect of God, Holy and Beloved, Bowels of Mercy, Kindness, Humbleness of Mind, Meekness, Long-suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any Man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave us, so should we; and above all things put on Charity, which is the bond of Perfection; and let the Peace of God rule in our Hearts, to the which also we are called in one Body; as the Apostle himself speaks, Col. 3.*

TO provoke you hereunto, many arguments might be drawn, not only from the sense of the best Heathens, who held it unlawful to revenge Injury with Injury, (upon which Subject *Maximus Tyrius* spends a whole Discourse) but from the Noble *Examples* of many of them also, and particularly that of *Phocion*, who after all the eminent Services for his Country-men, the *Athenians*, being at last condemned to be poisoned, before he drank off

*Alian.
Var. Hist.
l. 12. c. 49.*

off the deadly Potion, lest this strict charge with his Son, that he should never remember so as to be revenged for the Injustice and Ingratitude of the *Athenians*.

BUT because Christianity is a Religion of a most elevated Nature, and that which speaks so plain, and so loud as to this point; and because that noble part of it, this Christian Solemnity, doth of it self Minister arguments enough to command our Obedience as to this particular, I shall not go out of my way to pick up Observations, that may be more curious than necessary; but rather content my self with what hath been said already, and so shut up this Subject with a few Considerations which immediately relate to our Christian Practice.

I told you before, that all Acts of Revenge are quite contrary to the Laws of Christ's Religion; meaning by Revenge all spiteful acts, or purposes of hurting another for hurt-sake, without consideration had of a good end, whether of Charity or Justice: and then I distinguish pure Revenge from such acts as concern Discipline or Reparation; which two last cases being so incident to human life, and cases wherein the Consciences of Men ought to be well instructed and govern'd, I shall now

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at the close of all speak something by way of direction as to these two cases; and the rather, because I have found by frequent experience, that upon Injuries which too commonly happen between Man and Man, divers have been hindered from the use of the blessed Sacrament, for want, as I am willing in Charity to suppose, of due Information.

I. FIRST then, as to acts of Discipline, It is not at all inconsistent with the great ends of this Sacred Ordinance, nor with our Duty in order to it, or at it, to use honest means of reprehending or correcting an Offender, provided those means be used after a discreet and friendly manner; and for the Offender's good. So the Magistrate may punish a disorderly Subject, a Father his Child, a Master his Servant, in all necessary cases. For this is not properly Revenge; because the Methods, though they may be somewhat strict, are still for charitable ends, viz. For the amendment and Reformation of the Offender; which in such cases every Man should carry in his Eye: for what St. Paul said of his own Authority in the Church, is very applicable to all just Power whatsoever, the Lord hath given it for *Edification, and not for Destruction*; 1 Cor. 10. 8.

2. AS to Cases which concern Reparation for Injuries, they admit of great variety, according to the variety of particular Circumstances ; but I think what is generally necessary to be known, may be comprehended within these following Rules, or reduced to them.

1. WHERE an injury is *Plain, Evident, and Palpable*, Men are to seek for redress first, by fair and private applications. This is not Revenge, nor any breach of Duty, because it is a Case of Justice purely, and the method is Friendly and Charitable. To this may be applied those words of our Saviour, *Matth. 18. If thy Brother Trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone ; but if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, &c.* And if any thing be needful to be added, certainly a more prudential Course cannot be taken, than what our Lord elsewhere prescribes, *Agree with thine Adversary quickly, whilst thou art in the way with him, Matth. 5. 25.* Such Timely and Pacifick means of accommodation are apt to preserve Charity ; whereas other Methods that are rough may, like a wound that festers, make a deep impression upon the Sense, and corrupt Friendship, so as to turn it into Rage, or a settled hatred.

2. IF

2. IF such Christian applications cannot obtain their End, the Offender must be forborn; provided the injury be not considerable in it self or in its Consequences, although it be evident. 'Tis true, a wrong being done, he that did it becomes liable to Justice; but it doth not follow, that a Man may not forbear him in light and trivial matters; for Charity and Peace sake we are to possess our Souls in Patience, with an humble submission to the good Providence of God for reparation in his way. And to this purpose is that Law of Christ, Matth 5. 39, 40. *Whoſoever ſhall ſmite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other alſo; and if any Man will ſue thee at the Law, and take away thy Coat, let him take thy Cloak alſo.* Theſe are Proverbial Expreſſions, which ſignifie light and inconsiderable Injuries; and they are to be underſtood in a *Comparative* ſenſe to this purpoſe; that when wrongs are ſmall, and of no greater account than a little blow, or an upper Garment amounts to, rather than venture the breach of Peace or Charity, we are to be content with the loſs, if Reparation cannot be obtained by *ſoft* and gentle Proceedings.

* Vid.
Grot. de
jure belli.
lib. 2. c.
20. Sect. 8.

3. WHERE the injury is heavy and grievous, so that Reparation becomes necessary, you are not to require it with your own hands, or by private and personal violences; but by the help of the Magistrate. * To this purpose is that other Law of Christianity, Rom. 12. 9. *Dearly Beloved, avenge not your selves, but rather give place unto wrath; for it is written, Vengeance is mine, I will repay it, saith the Lord.*

4. AS appeals to the Magistrate in weighty Cases are Lawful (for he is the Minister of God, and his Office is to Relieve such as are Oppressed) so must the Proceedings before him be without Covetousness, without Envy, without Sinister Arts, and without any Gall and Bitterness of Spirit. For whatever a Man's Losses are, he must not lose or let go his Charity. He should Love and Pity, and be ready to shew Mercy, and to do good Offices to the Offender, even when he seeks Reparations for the Offence it self. An enraged Heart, an Ulcerated Mind, Affections foaming out hatred and malice, these are the worst of Plaintiffs in the best of Causes: They spoil in a great measure a very just Controversie, and make it all one in effect with Cruelty and Revenge; with this scurvy difference, that a Malicious

cious Suit many times cuts deeper wounds than a private stroak, when 'tis commenced upon premeditation, and carried on with implacability, and is at last armed with the Sword of publick Justice.

NOW by these Four Rules a Man may examine his Condition, and make a right judgment of his Charity; as every one ought to do, before he comes to the Holy Communion. If he seeks for Reparation by fair means, and after a Friendly and Christian manner; if it be not any inward rancour or hatred that moves him to it, but only the nature of the injury; if it be of such importance as that it makes Redress necessary either for himself, or for his Relatives, who have a dependance upon him, and some share with him in all his Civil Rights; if he be not his own avenger, but commits his Cause into the hands of those who judge for the Lord; and if in his whole Behaviour he manageth himself with Christian simplicity and candour of mind, and with an heart desirous of perfect Reconciliation and Peace. I do not see what just reason such a Man hath to forbear the use of the Holy Sacrament. The Injurer indeed is bound to make Reparation, and by all possible means to Sollicite his Friendship,

and to beg his Forgiveness; but the injured Party hath done all that either a Good or a Prudent Person can be supposed able to do in such Circumstances. But if Malice, or Spight, or Inhumanity, a Quarrellsome Mind, a vexatious Spirit, an Oppressive or Revengeful Humour be at the bottom of all this, or in any part of it, I have no more to say, but that such a one must bewail his great wickedness, and Repent of it, and implore the forgiveness of God and Man for it, and endeavour to new-mould and rectifie his Uncharitable and Unchristian Temper, before he presume to go to the Lord's Table; the Blessed Sacrament being too Holy a Thing, to be put into the mouth of a Tyger, or a Wolf. And so much shall suffice to be spoken upon this Subject.

C H A P. X.

*Of our Behaviour at the time
of Receiving.*

HAVING thus Largely Discoursed upon the point of Preparation, because it is of such vast Concernment in order to our acceptance with God, I proceed now to what is yet behind. For hitherto I have brought you but as it were to the Porch of the Temple, and must lead you next to the very Altar of God; and consequently must shew, first what you are to do there, and then how you are to behave your selves after your departure thence.

1. **FIRST** then we are to Consider, that we are going upon no less a business than to offer up our *Whole Man*, not our Souls only (though that be the chief Oblation) but our very *Bodies also, a Living Sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is our reasonable Service*, as St. Paul speaks, Rom. 12. 1.

2. **THAT** we may not present the Sacrifice of Fools, nor turn our Offerings into an Abomination; 'tis necessary for us

to entertain very serious and awful thoughts of God's Omniscience, that we are in his presence, and under his eye, that he observeth our whole deportment, that he searcheth our Hearts and Reins, and understandeth our Thoughts afar off. Accordingly we must present our selves before him, not as a thing of course, or only to comply with a Custom, but as in the sight of God, with reverent apprehensions of his Divine and Infinite Majesty, with all Lowliness and Humility of Mind, with Souls bowing and cast down to the dust, under the sense of our own unworthiness, with Consciences void of all Offence, with Spirits enflamed with the Love of God and Man, and with that true sincerity and simplicity which is the inseparable Ornament of every honest heart, and which in the sight of God is of great price.

3. THE happy hour being now come, that we are to be entertained at God's Table, and must take the Seals of his Covenant into our Mouths, we should remember the promises we made to God in private, we should repeat our Vows and Resolutions, and put our Souls upon fresh exercises of Faith and Holiness.

SEEING Holiness ever becometh the
House

House of God, and especially when we Celebrate this Holy Mystery, we are to void and empty our Minds, as much as 'tis possible, of every thing that is earthly or unclean; to lift up our hearts, and fix them upon things above; to employ our thoughts only upon that Divine Service we are now concern'd in; to be full of Heavenly Contemplations, and so to warm our affections by them, that with Angels, or Archangels, and with all the Company of Heaven we may most devoutly Praise and Magnifie the Name of him, whom those Blessed Spirits above continually worship, and rest not day and Night, saying *Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.*

BE sure to act your Repentance over again, because this is the thing which through the blood of Christ doth sanctifie the unclean, and render us capable of the Benefits of the Sacrament. Mortifie therefore your Members which are upon the Earth, and all the sinful deeds of the Body, Adultery, Fornication, Unclean-ness, Inordinate Affection, Evil Concupiscence, Covetousness (which is Idolatry) Hatred, Variance, Emulations, Wrath, Strife, Seditions, Heresies, Envyings, Murthers,

Murthers, Drunkenness, Revellings, and such like, of which the Holy Scripture plainly tells us, that they *which do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God*, Gal. 5. 21. These Vices therefore, and whatever else any of us may be more especially addicted or enclined to, we must seriously endeavour by the help of God's Grace, and to the utmost of our power to subdue and cast away from us; and then is a most necessary time to do this, at least to do it in purpose and resolution of heart, when we are now going to the Holy Table; then it is time indeed to resolve upon amendment and newness of Life, and to vow entire obedience to the Laws of Christ's Religion, as far as 'tis consistent with this State of mortality and weakness, and as far as 'tis possible for poor Creatures that are compassed about with so many infirmities; then it is time to *cleanse our selves from all filthiness of Flesh and Spirit*, to enter at least upon a Life of Holiness; to wash our hands and hearts in Innocence, and so to *compass the Altar of God*.

BEING thus rightly disposed, we are then to behold the Fountain which is opened to us for Sin, and for Uncleanness, I mean the blood of Christ, *which purgeth our Consciences from all dead works, to serve the*

the living God, Heb. 9. 14. Now 'tis a seasonable time for us to call to mind the coronary Thorns, the Scourge, the Nails, and the Spear which *opened* this Fountain. To remember our blessed Lord's Agony in the Garden, his bloody Sweat, his Buffetings and Stripes, his dolours and most bitter Death upon the Cross. To consider that all this was for us sinful Men, and for our Salvation, to reconcile us to his Father, *to Redeem us from all Iniquity, and to beget us again to a lively Hope, to an Inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for us; because he so loved us all, that whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have Everlasting Life.* These Holy Meditations are not only proper and seasonable, when we are now at the Supper of the Lamb, but they are moreover naturally apt to enflame your Affections with the love of Jesus, to dissolve and melt you into Penitential showers, to ravish your Hearts with a sense of his infinite Goodness, to fill you with Divine Extasies and Raptures, and to fix your Resolutions of obeying for ever the Author of your Salvation; of following his blessed steps with all Meekness and Humility, and of bearing, not only his Yoak, but even his Cross too, and in all things

things of being made conformable to his Image.

NEXT to the love of God, and of Christ, let the love of all Mankind replenish and possess your Hearts. God forbid that Malice, or Uncharitableness, or Bitterness, and Rancour of Spirit, God forbid that any of these, or such unclean things should ever be brought before the Altar of Peace, and Reconciliation. If he so loved us, we ought to love one another; because, *he tasted Death for every Man; he is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to Repentance; he is the Saviour of all Men, especially of them that believe;* and seeing every Soul is precious in his sight; every Soul should be dear to us; and our Love to all Mankind should be extensive and unlimited, as *his* was: And to express this Love we should be ready to do good to all, desire and endeavour the Salvation of all, and devoutly pray (as the Primitive Christians did, whose Hearts were so warm with the Blood of Christ) *for the whole Race of Mankind*, not only for the Church of God, and for every part and Member thereof, but for all too that are as yet without the borders of the Sanctuary, and for all Estates and Conditions of Men, that no corner of the Universe may be too remote for our Charity,

Charity, and that however the Uncertainties and Chances, or the Evils of this World may sever or *distinguish* us, yet nothing may be able to *separate* us from the love of those for whom Christ died.

THESE are Divine things to exercise and employ your Minds at this great Solemnity. And as touching your outward deportment, there are these particulars, which I would recommend to your Christian practice at the time of Ministration.

1. THAT ye dispose of your selves as near as may be to the Lord's Table, that you may behold what is transacted there. For besides the *Decency*, which is in the thing it self (when the Children of God humbly present themselves round about his Table) this is apt to *exalt* and *heighten* your Devotion still, and to give your Affections a new warmth, when you *see*, as it were, Jesus Christ crucified *before your Eyes*.

2. THE Mystery of his Passion being thus visibly represented, by the breaking of the Bread (the Symbol of his Body) and by the pouring out of the Wine (the Symbol of his Blood) then *sursum corda* (as the Exhortation was in the Primitive Ages of Christianity) *lift up your Hearts* to him who was dead, and is now alive for evermore, and offer unto him privately

ly these, or the like holy Ejaculations:
*O Lamb of God that takest away the Sins
 of the World, grant us thy Peace: O
 Lamb of God that takest away the Sins of
 the World, have Mercy upon us.*

3. **THROUGHOUT** the Prayer of the Church wherein *you* are concern'd, be sure to bear your *Parts* with *Heart* and *Voice* too. For this doth not only help to preserve a Man's *own* Zeal in a due Fervour, and to keep his mind *fixt* and *intent*, and free from distraction, but it is moreover an excellent means to raise the Devotion of *other* Communicants. When every one assisteth, and all jointly mingle their Devotions, the common flame is very much increased, every one bringing sparks to the Altar, to kindle in each others Heart the love of Christ. For the confirmation of this, I appeal to every sensible Mans experience, who desires to serve God *in the Beauty of Holiness*. How lovely, how delightful a thing is it, when People meet *together* to Worship God, to send up their Prayers and Praises to him with *one* Lip? And how apt is this to inspire every good Heart with Fervency, and to heat every ones Affections, each Man catching some fire from his Neighbour? How like then is the Church to Heaven, and how transported do we seem

to be, as if we were among that blessed Quire above, where St. John in his Vision saw the four and twenty Elders falling down before him that sat on the Throne, and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their Crowns before the Throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive Glory, and Honour, and Power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy Pleasure they are and were created, Rev.

4. 10, 11. And where should we imitate this blessed and Heaven-like Harmony, if not at this Divine Solemnity, where we celebrate the memorial of our Redemption too? of our Redemption, I say; the great work of God, a work so worthy of God, so stupendous, so full of the Riches of his Grace, that to be unconcern'd among the common Thanksgivings of the Church, must needs be an Argument of a Mind very dull and insensate, very deeply possess'd with a Spirit of Slumber.

4. WHEN you are now to receive the Divine Food, and Jesus, as it were, coming under your Roof, receive with all Humility; let every lofty imagination fall, and every Knee Bend: Not that we may adore the Sacramental Bread and Wine (that were Idolatry to be abhorred of all faithful Christians) but as an humble Profession of our own great unworthiness, and as a grateful

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Acknowledgement of those infinite *Mercies* werewith God is pleased to crown us at this time, it is no more than what is decent and becoming us to be prostrate before him.

C H A P. XI.

Of Kneeling when People Receive.

ANY Reasonable and Humble Man may think, that of those few Ceremonies which are enjoyed in the Church of *England*, none can be less liable to Objections, than the posture of Kneeling at the Celebration of this Mystery, where we poor sinful Wretches are to receive so many stupendious Mercies at the hand of God. And yet considering the Scruples which have been created in some Peoples minds about this Ceremony, and that many have run away from this great Christian Ordinance, upon pretence that Kneeling is *unlawful*; I have thought it needful to insert here a short discourse, to undeceive well disposed Persons as to this particular.

FOR

FOR your satisfaction in this case, I must lay down this principle, that whatsoever is unlawful, must be *contrary* to some Law or other, either Moral or Positive, either Natural or Revealed. For a Man cannot be said to do an unlawful action, if that which he doth be not against some Rule: because *Sin is the Transgression of the Law*, 1 Joh. 3. 4. So that where *no Law is, there is no Transgression*, saith St. Paul, Rom. 4. 15. And again, *Sin is not imputed where there is no Law*, Rom. 5. 13. If then the posture of Kneeling when we receive the holy Sacrament, be unlawful, we must suppose it to be a Violation of some Law; and then these three things must be supposed also.

1. THAT the Law against Kneeling (if there be any such) is *plain*. For every Law being the Rule of Action, of Necessity it is required that it must be *evident*; because, otherwise we cannot know when we go right, or when we go wrong; which would be so far from governing us, that it would hinder us from acting at all; because in all dark and doubtful cases infinite Scruples must arise, which would render our Duty impracticable. As for instance; if it be said that there is a Divine Law about receiving the Holy Sacrament in such or such a
 O posture,

posture, unless I can clearly *discover* and *see* the Law, it will be impossible for me to tell what posture I am to use ; and consequently I must be discouraged from receiving at all ; because if I should, I must act wholly upon uncertainties, my Conscience being utterly unresolved, whether I use the right or wrong posture. A Law must be discernable and easie to be found out, especially in this case, wherein all Christians whatsoever, both Learned and Unlearned, are equally concern'd.

2. IT must be supposed, that this Law lieth in some positive Precept or other, or else is fetcht from some leading and Authoritative Example. For considering that every posture is indifferent in it self, neither absolutely necessary, nor absolutely sinful, it is impossible to conceive how I should be determined and bound up to the use of one, rather than another, but by some Command that peremptorily requires my Obedience, or by some overruling Example that exacteth my imitation. One of these things must be the Law in cases of this nature ; or else there can be none.

3. IT must be supposed too, that this Law (whether it be grounded upon some positive Precept, or upon Authoritative Example

Example) is clearly and evidently to be found in the *Word of God*. For, to make that unlawful, which the Word of God hath no where forbidden, is to say in effect, that the Word of God is not the Rule we are to go by, that the Scriptures are scanty and imperfect, as to the definitions of Good and Evil; that there is another Standard of our Duty over and above that Law of Liberty which is extant in the Bible, and that the great Law-giver of the World did not make sufficient Provisions for the Information and Government of Mens Consciences; and then the next thing is, that Men will set up any pretence against the Law of Christ, and call Evil, Good; and Good, Evil; according as their Fancy is, and just as the Humour takes them.

THESE three things being premised, we now desire our Dissenting Brethren to shew us where any Law against Kneeling at the Sacrament is plainly delivered in the whole Word of God. If they say the thing is unlawful, when there is no Law against it, all their talk is nothing but an heap of Nonsense. If they suppose such a Law, but cannot tell where to find it clearly, they ought to consider that doubtful Suppositions and uncertain Conjectures are no Rules of Conscience,

nor sufficient grounds for separation from a Church that cannot be proved a Transgressor. If they will ingeniously confess (as they ought) that there is nothing in the Scripture that condemns a kneeling posture, we shall take it as a sufficient Vindication of our Innocence, and thank them for being so just to us; but withal, must leave it to their serious consideration, whether they have not forsaken the Protestant Principle, of the Perfection of the Holy Scriptures, in making that to be Sinful, when in the account of Scripture it is not so?

BUT to bring the Controversie to a full Issue in this case, we of the Church of *England* do go upon three sure Principles. 1. That Christ gave no positive Command (that we read of) about any one particular kind of posture. 2. That nothing can be clearly against our kneeling posture, from the Example of our Saviour, or of his Apostles. 3. That were we sure what their posture was at the Institution of this Mystery, it ought not to be judged a leading and Authoritative Example nevertheless.

1. FIRST, we say, that Christ gave no positive Command (that we read of) about any one particular kind of posture. Of the truth hereof, any Man may be satisfied

satisfied presently, by looking into the account that is given in the Scriptures of the Institution of this Sacrament. For neither do the Evangelists, nor St. Paul speak one word of any particular posture that was ordered at the Celebration of this Mystery. Indeed, our Saviour said, *Do this* (meaning what he and his Disciples did then) as St. Luke and St. Paul affirm. But that Command relates only to the *Action* of Ministering and Receiving of Christ's Passion; it doth not in any wise respect a *Posture*. For St. Matthew and St. Mark render it, *Take, eat, and drink ye all of this* (as St. Matthew speaks of the administration of the Cup:) So that by *doing this*, must be meant only the Sacramental *Action*. Besides, it is not said simply, *Do this*, but *Do this in remembrance of me*, which manifestly relates to the *breaking* of the *Bread*, and to the *pouring* out of the *Wine*, whereby the Passion is represented; and it is not the *Posture* (be it what it will) but the *Ministration* that is the Memorial of a broken and Crucified Jesus. Lastly, the Posture is a *Circumstance* only; and if Men suppose that the Command, *Do this*, respecteth that Circumstance, they may as well suppose that it respecteth all the other Circumstances too; and then they must

think themselves bound to Celebrate the Lord's Supper at *Night* too, and after a Meal, and in a private House, and in an upper Room, and with such a Select Number, and with Unleavened Bread, and the like. For the Command extendeth to *all*, as well as to *one* Circumstance, if Men argue that way; but the truth is, it extendeth to no Circumstance at all, and consequently not to any one sort of Posture; and therefore it must be concluded, that neither Kneeling, nor any other Posture is in it self Unlawful, or Contradictory to any positive Command of Christ.

2. IT must be then some *Example* or other of Christ and his Apostles, that is pretended to be against us; and this I know is the general Objection, which I shall consider distinctly, because at the first sight there seem to be some intimations in Scripture, which are apt to startle such people as do not read the Sacred Story with due Consideration and Care.

1. THEY say that Kneeling was not our Saviour's posture, when he himself did eat of this Bread, and drink of this Cup. But now, what if our Blessed Saviour did not receive this Sacrament *at all*? Indeed 'tis commonly thought, and confidently affirmed that he did so; but

if we look well into it, we may find it a very improbable presumption; and I am clearly of Opinion, that it is a vulgar Error, and my Reasons are these.

1. WE cannot gather so much from any part of Scripture. Indeed we read, that Christ did eat of the *Passover* with his Disciples, and that when he had *Suppered* upon the Passover, he instituted *this* Solemnity; but we find not the least intimation that he *Communicated* of the Sacred Elements, at or after the Institution. St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke, and St. Paul do all agree, that he took Bread (into his hands) that he *blessed* it, that he *brake* it, and then *gave it to his Disciples*, commanding *them* to take and eat; moreover that he took the *Cup* (into his hands likewise) that he *gave thanks* over it, and that then he gave it to his *Disciples*, that *they* should drink of it. But in all the relation of the Story, there is not one word of his *own* eating of the Bread, or drinking of the Wine. Nor, 2dly, is it probable, that he would do so, because there was no reason for his *own* doing of it. He was bound indeed to Communicate of the *Passover*, because he was a *Jew*, made under the Law, and consequently obliged to observe the *Mosaicall Ordinances*; but this was a Mystery

of his own appointing, and the Ends and Effects of it did concern his *Church* only; that his *Church* might Celebrate a public Memorial of him, that his *Church* might seal her Duty to God, and might have the pledge of God's Mercy and Loving kindness to *Her*; that his *Church* might partake of *Him*, and of his *Spirit*, and receive all the blessings of the New Covenant. These were weighty Reasons in respect of Christ's *Church*; but they did not at all concern Christ *himself*. It was not reasonable that he should do this in memory of *himself*; it was not needful that this should be a Covenant-Rite between him, and his Father; it is not conceiveable that he should Communicate of his own Body and Blood; it was not possible, that he who was without Sin, should Eat and Drink for the Remission of *Sins*; and therefore it is not probable at all, that he did Communicate of the Sacramental Bread and Wine with his Disciples. And hence it necessarily followeth, that 'tis most irrational and absurd to argue for or against any posture, from our *Saviour's* bodily deportment at the Institution of this Sacrament, because *he* himself was no *Communicant* at that time. For as touching the Posture that was used at the *Paschal Supper* (what-
ever

ever that posture was) it is a thing of *Foreign* Consideration, and impertinent to the *Question*, and concerns not *Us*, because the Customs of the *Jews* at their Passover (being grounded upon Peculiar and Special Reasons) lay not the least tie upon Christians at this Sacrament. The Enquiry among *Us* is, touching Christ's *Example* at this new Solemnity; and 'tis Ridiculous to conclude, that to kneel in the act of Receiving, is against the Example of our Lord, when it appears more than probable that he himself received not; what he did at that time with his Disciples, he did purely as their *Master*, and *Priest*, but not as a *Guest* with them *then*; so that if any Directions be to be taken from the Example of Christ, they serve to guide those who in Christ's stead *Minister* at the Holy Table, rather than to Govern any that are *Partakers* of the Altar.

2. SEEING then there is no Argument against Kneeling from our *Saviour's* Example, let us proceed to the second branch of the Objection, and see whether this posture be against the Example of our *Saviour's Disciples*? And for the voiding of *this* pretence also, I think we may lay down this as a very safe Proposition, that 'tis utterly *uncertain* in what posture the

the Disciples received the Sacrament at the Lord's hand. For the right understanding and full proof of this Matter, we must remember that there was a *Twofold* Feast which was Celebrated at that time, the Jewish Passover *first*, and *after* that was ended, this *Christian Banquet*. Now as to the posture both of our Saviour, and his Disciples at the *Paschal Supper*, there is not much difficulty; for it was for the most part a Recumbent or Leaning Posture upon little *Beds*. According to the ancient Custom of Feasting, every Guest had his Pallet, and thereon he rested himself, with his body leaning upon his left side, that his right hand might be at liberty for Food. * This Custom was

* *Vid. Dr. Lightfoot, Hor. Heb. in. Matth. 26.*

Grot. in Matth. 26.

generally used in the Eastern Countries (especially by the *Assyrians*) thence it came among the *Greeks*, and from them the *Romans* borrowed it too. Now this same Custom was observed by the *Jews* in our Saviour's time, and indeed long before, especially at the Passover Supper; and they used this *Recumbent* or *Leaning* posture the rather, because it was a signification of *Liberty*, a Token that they were at *Rest* in the Promised Land; and it look'd Great and Stately, as being used

used (saith my Author) by *Princes*, and *Great Men*, whereas to *stand* was an argument of a *Slave*. * The Holy

Jesus being desirous to Eat the Passover with his Disciples, yet not willing to cross an innocent Custom, sendeth two of his Company before hand, to make the Banquet ready in a large upper Room, that was ready furnished and prepared, *Mar. 14 15.* and there he *sat down* with the Twelve, as it is, *Matth. 26. 20.* But in truth the Phrase is not fitly rendered in our English Bible, though it be rendered so in every one of the Evangelists. It should be Translated rather, he *laid down* with the Twelve. * For

* *Tenemus ad accubitum dum Comedimus, ut comedamus more Regum & Magnatum; Maimonid. Mos servorum est, ut edant stantes; R. Levi, cited by Dr. Lightfoot, ubi supra.*

they that are skilled in the Greek Language, do know that none of those words which are used in the Original, do strictly Signifie a *Sitting* (nor indeed any determinate) posture, but note at large an *Inclination* of the Body. And that this was a *Leaning* Posture we may easily gather out of *St. John 13.* Where 'tis said that (Jesus having declared that one of them should betray him) *Peter* beckned to *John* (who was leaning on Jesus's Bosom, and lying on his breast) to ask *who it was?* For the Custom was, that where

* ἀνέκλιτο μετὰ τῶν δίδωκε, *Matth. ἀνέκλιθεν αὐτῶν, Marc. ἀνέκλιτο, Luc. ἀναπεσὼν πάλιν, Joan.*

where *three* Guests were in company the Chiefest of them lay on a Pallet in the

Cum duo essent, dignior primus accubuit in lectulo suo, & secundus ab eo supra eum accubuit, id est, in lectulo juxta cervicali dignioris posito. Si tres essent, dignissimus accubuit in medio, & secundus ab eo supra eum, & tertius infra eum, id est, juxta stragulas pedum ejus. Hebrew Gloss, quoted by Dr. Lightfoot, loc. laud.

Middle; the next on a Pallet behind his Neck, somewhat above his Pillow; and the third, on a Pallet *before* him, with his Face towards the most Honourable Person, and near his Bosom. And our Saviour and those two Apostles being thus placed, St. Peter could easily beckon to St. John, by looking over the holy Jesus, and our

Lord could as easily answer St. John's Question, without lifting up his Body, which would have been somewhat necessary, had he talked with St. Pe-

Si vult dignissimus cum secundo ab eo colloqui, necesse est ut se erigat à recubitione sua, ita ut erectus sedeat. Ibid.

ter. And if this be not enough to shew, that a leaning posture was customary among all the Jews at their Solemn Feasts, I shall only add, that the Hebrew Doctors distinguish between sitting and Recumbency, before a Table; and do tell us, that the *Israelites* thought a *recumbent* posture very decent at an ordinary meal, very requisite at all holy Banquets; but at the Paschal Supper most necessary, unless it was

shall only do usually

Illiusmodi recumbentiam in capiendis cibo Israelita gestum maxime idoneum reputarant, in epulis sacris requisitum, in cena Paschali summe necessarium & requisitissimum. Ibid. 9. v.

at

at the eating of the *bitter Herbs*, and of the drinking of the two last Eucharistical *Cups*.

2. Now by this that hath been spoken it doth appear, that our Dissenting Brethren get nothing at all on their side for either of thole Gestures which they use at the Sacrament, though we should grant the Example of Christ and his Disciples at the Passover to be *imitable*. But for the further satisfaction of such deluded people, let us go on still. And the first point being already cleared, touching the Example of our Lord and his Retinue and the *Paschal Solemnity*, I proceed, secondly, to shew how difficult it is to determine what posture the Disciples used at the *Sacrament* that succeeded the Passover, and how very *uncertain* that Principle is, which our Dissenting Brethren go upon, whether it be a *sitting* or a *standing* Gesture which they are for, and how vainly and weakly they argue from the practice of the *Apostles*.

THE *Paschal Supper* being ended, and our Saviour being now at perfect *Liberty*, how to employ the rest of his time, he *riseth* from his Pallet, and *washeth his Disciples Feet*, as we find, *Joh. 13*. (for this washing was, as I conceive, at that time, whatever reasons have been offered by

See the
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kneeling;
part 1.

by some learned Men to the contrary.) And after the most humble Ministration in all probability it was, that the *Blessed Sacrament* was instituted; but what the exact minute was, is uncertain; and what the Disciples posture was at the receiving of it, is uncertain also. That it was a *sitting* posture with their Bodies erect, there is not the least Colour to imagine. For though variety of gestures was used at the Paschal Solemnity, yet I do not find that a *sitting* gesture was used then at all; rather, it was look'd upon then as an Irregular, Indecent, and Scandalous posture. That the Disciples communicated in the usual *Table posture*, as they lay along upon Beds, is an Opinion that is somewhat favoured by a Passage in *Joh. 13.* where we read, that having washed his Disciples Feet, Christ laid himself down the second time; and after that, we read of St. *John's* leaning by his Bosom; so that since this was St. *John's* posture, 'tis reasonable to believe that 'twas the posture of the rest too; and then it may seem probable that they all received the Sacrament as they lay in that manner. But then on the other hand, all this is but bare *Probability*; for it is uncertain what part of time it was, that the Disciples were leaning again

gain in that posture, whether it was before, or at, or after the Administration of the New Sacrament. For after the *Passover-Supper*, our Lord spent much time in the upper Room with his Disciples; some, in instituting this Mystery; some, in giving hints to *Judas*, and in discovering the Treachery of his Heart by degrees: Some, in discoursing upon the necessary Virtue of Humility; some in comforting the Spirits of his sorrowful Retinue; some in teaching them Love and Charity; some in Prayer; and some in singing an Hymn before they departed. Now we cannot certainly tell what particular point of time it was, yet *St. John* and his Fellow-Disciples lay upon their Pallets the *second* time; and therefore it is not evident, whether they communicated of the Symbols of their Master's Passion, in that *Recumbent* posture or no. Some again are of Opinion, that the Disciples received the Sacrament in a *standing* posture; because the *Jews* were wont to stand when they *Blessed*, and gave Thanks to God; and they were acts of *Worship* which the Lord Jesus performed at the Institution of this Ordinance; and therefore he might perform them perhaps after the accustomed manner: but still this is only *Opinion* and *Probability*; it is not
certain

certain, because the Scripture gives us no account of it; 'tis altogether silent as to this matter; and therefore we dare not (we must not) define positively, or subscribe to the truth of it. Upon the same (and possibly *better*) reasons, what if some should affirm, that the Disciples received in a *kneeling* posture? I know the notion will seem to be *new*; but yet it seems to be built upon as *fair* an Hypothesis, as any of the former; at least that they communicated in an *Adoring* and *Worshipping* manner. This I am sure of, that there are as substantial, and certain grounds for this opinion, as for any of the *rest*: This *plainly appears*, that divers Persons being surpris'd with a sudden apprehension of our Saviour's dignity, of the greatness of his Power, did (after the accustomed manner in that Country) *fall down before his Feet*, so that St. Peter himself did it, upon the miraculous Draught of Fish, *Luke 5*. And why might not all the Disciples do this, at his institution of the *Blessed Sacrament* (which he told them was the representation of his own Flesh and Blood) especially after he himself had Preached unto them a *Lecture of Humility*, when he had washed their Feet? Indeed, the Sacred Story gives us no Authority to affirm this *positively*

positively and *dogmatically*; but yet there are *probable* Arguments for Mens Conjecture this way: And as far as I can see; all *other* Opinions are but *Conjectures*; and I hope we may have leave to opine as well as other Men.

BUT we cannot be so confident; as to determine this matter, in regard that we want the Testimony of Scripture, though Reason may be on our side. And herein we would give a Pattern to our Dissenting Brethren, to be modest in *Opinions*, for which they have no solid Foundation; where, I pray, is the ground they go upon, touching the unlawfulness of Kneeling, as a thing repugnant to the Example of the Apostles; since it cannot be proved, what that Example was? It might be a posture of *Kneeling* and *Adoration*, for ought they know. Sitting it was *not* (I dare confidently affirm:) In all probability, 'twas not a standing posture neither; *perhaps* it was the posture which we customarily use; if not, it was a *leaning* posture upon Pallets: And no body now insisteth upon that for an Example to us.

3. AND yet, Thirdly, were the Examples both of Christ's Disciples, and of Christ himself, *apparently* such, as some Men conjecture, they would not yet be

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leading

leading and Authoritative Precedents to us in this point. For 'tis generally agreed by all Christian Divines, that the Example of Christ is not *universally* to be followed (much less the Example of his *Disciples*) In some things 'tis not possible, in other things 'tis not proper, in many things 'tis not necessary for us to follow that Copy. Where we have the Example and the Precept too, there indeed we are bound (and I wish Men would consider of those *weighty* things, rather than of Matters of *slender* importance.) But where we have no *Command*, there to take an *Example* for our Rule, is to make our selves guilty in some instances of Folly, and in some of Superstition, and Presumption. The Practice of our Lord and his Disciples is no Rule for us in *Circumstantials* and *Rites*, unless they are made necessarily Practical by some Positive *Direction* and *Command*. Now we have no Command in this Case, the one way, or the other (no, not evident *Example*) to direct us, and therefore they talk vainly and impertinently, who Condemn Kneeling at the Sacrament as an unlawful Posture; since no Law can be derived either from Christ's *Precept*, or from *His* or his *Disciples* Practice, that doth *evidently* rise up in Judgment *against* it.

THE Church then being left to her Liberty what posture to use, thought fit to chuse that of *Kneeling*, for these three Reasons chiefly.

1. TO testify our belief of our Saviour's *Godhead*. Had he been a meer Creature; as all other Men are, we might have had some encouragement to present our selves at his Table, as his Fellows, and in a common Table-Gesture, as those are wont to do, who deny the Doctrine of his Divinity. But being the Eternal Son of God, and equal to the Father, he hath a Right and Claim to the humblest Services we can think of, to express in some measure the sense we should have of his Infinite Greatness and Majesty; especially at an Ordinance which was instituted in Honour to him.

2. AS a Posture that is most suitable to the Nature of the Mystery it self. Here we Commemorate the Lord's Infinite Goodness and Love, his unexpressible Sufferings for us, and his humbling of himself to Death, even the Death of the Cross. Here we feed upon the Symbols of his Body and Blood for the Pardon of all our Sins. Here we Seal anew unto God our Covenant of Faith, Mortification, and Obedience; and God reneweth unto us his Covenant of Grace and Mer-

cy. Here all that we do is Divine Worship; the Mystery is a most Solemn Eucharist, or Thanksgiving; a real and lively Form of praising God, as Psalms and Hymns are at other times: And all this is attended with devout Prayer from the beginning to the end; the whole Congregation praying for all Estates and Conditions of Men; the Minister praying for every particular Communicant; and each particular Communicant consenting to the Prayer, joyning his own suffrage, and praying in his own person for the preservation of his Soul and Body. So that Adoration and Worship being our whole work at this time, it ought to be performed in an adoring posture; not only with Eyes and Hands lifted up, but with bended Knees too, which all Nations have ever thought the most solemn and suitable posture of Adoration.

3. THE Church hath chosen, it as a Posture that is most expressive of our *Gratitude* to God for the astonishing Mercies which all Worthy Communicants receive at this Great Solemnity; Forgiveness of Sin, Peace with God, the Increase of the Holy Spirit, Divine Influences from above, from the Man Christ Jesus; with an Earnest and Pledge of a Happy Resurrection, and a Glorious Immortality.

FROM

FROM all which Considerations every Pious and Humble Soul may argue after this manner. Since this is the Symbol of the blood of God, which was shed for me, and for many, for the Remission of all our Sins, shall I not receive it upon my Knees? Since Heaven is his Throne, and the Earth his Footstool, what place can be too vile, or what gesture too lowly, for Sinful dust and ashes? Since we are now admitted to the presence of the Lamb, and to the Gate of Heaven; *O come let us Worship, and fall down, and kneel before the Lord our Maker,* and Redeemer. If the Blessed Jesus in his Agony fell down with his Knees placed on the bare ground, how can I now begrudge the bowing of mine? Since the Praises of God are now to be in my mouth, what better Example can I follow, than those Elders in Heaven, who *fell down before Him that sat on the Throne, and Worshipt Him that liveth for ever, and ever, saying—Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come?* Since my Blessed Redeemer was pleased to humble himself even to the Death of the Cross, what humility can be great enough for Me, who am now to gather up my Life and Happiness at his feet? Since I am now to beg for a Bless-

fed Eternity, and to offer up my whole self a Reasonable, Holy, and Living Sacrifice; what more reasonable for me, than to beg God's acceptance of my Prayers and Oblation upon my bended Knees? And since my Eating and Drinking at the Lord's Table is a Pledge of so many stupendious Mercies to come, how can I chuse but kneel, when I take the Seals of his Promises at his hands?

THIS is enough to shew what a becoming and suitable posture *Kneeling* is at this Great Solemnity, and how Naturally it follows, where People entertain right Notions of it, and come unto it with humble Minds. Nor can I sufficiently admire, that of all the Usages in the Christian Church, this so Significant, so Decent a Ceremony, should ever become a stumbling-block, and matter of Dispute. Certainly it must be an ill sign of very Lofty Imaginations, when there is such stiffness in Mens Knees.

BUT it is high time for me to proceed.

CHAP.

C H A P. XII.

*Of our Behaviour after Re-
ceiving.*

WHEN we have thus devoutly employ'd this blessed hour, we must not imagine that our great Business is at an end; that we may now drop those Religious Considerations which hitherto took up our time and thoughts; that we may now go home, leaving our Vows and Resolutions behind us in the Church, much less may we think ourselves free to fall afresh upon our former course of Life. I must tell you, the greatest part of our business is yet before us, and to stop and rest here in the performance of those things which have hitherto employ'd our minds, is the ready way to unravel our whole work, and to defeat the design of this Heavenly Ordinance. For this Rite of *Eating and Drinking* at the Lord's Table, though it be of admirable use, yet it is not *naturally* and *intrinsically* good, as those Acts and Dispositions of the *Mind*, are, wherein the Substance and Excellence of Religion doth

consist; but it is a *Relative* thing, instituted by our Saviour as a Means to promote and carry on that Noble End, for which the *Grace of God hath appeared unto all Men; that denying all Ungodliness and Worldly Lusts, we should live Soberly, Righteously, and Godly in this present World*, Tit. 2. 12. Here indeed we lay the Foundation of a life of Virtue, by devoting unto God the Powers and Faculties of our Souls, and the Members of our Bodies: but as the Ground-work is in order to a Superstructure; so are our Actions now in order to the further edifying and perfecting of us, that we may be *built up more and more in our most Holy Faith, and being fitly framed together and compacted, may grow and rise up by degrees to an Holy Temple for the Lord, to be an Habitation of God through the Spirit*.

THIS you will easily perceive, if you observe, 1. The Nature of the Ordinance it self. It is first, a Representation of the very Death of Christ; a Representation exhibited to our Sences, by the breaking of the Bread, and the effusion of the Wine. And what doth *this* mean, but to awaken our *Fears*, by shewing us the Terror of the Lord, who for the expiation of the World's Guilt, spared not his own Son, nor would be reconciled to the World at a low-

lower rate, than by delivering him up to Torments and Death for us all? What doth it mean, but to set our Zeal a work upon mortifying all our Lusts and Affections, and upon perfecting Holiness in the fear of God, because Christ gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all Iniquity, and Purifie unto himself a peculiar People, zealous of good works? What doth it mean, but to make us ever watchful and circumspect, lest we tread under foot the Blood of the Son of God? Because, if we sin wilfully after we have received the Knowledge of the Truth, *there remaineth no more Sacrifice for Sin, Heb. 10. 26.* It is, secondly, a Memorial of Christ's Love, Love stronger than Death, that made him give his life a ransom for the ungodly. And what doth *this* mean, but to kindle in our Hearts the most ardent Affections to Him again, who so loved us, as to die for us? The greatest Affection this, that 'tis possible for any Mortal Man to express, to lay down his Life for the Brethren: But yet infinitely short of that, which the Son of God expressed upon the Cross, for his *Enemies*: In this he commended his Love towards us, above all proportion and comparison, in that *while we were yet Sinners Christ died for us, the Just for the Unjust.* It is
thirdly,

thirdly, a fœderal Solemnity, whereby we renew the Covenant we entred into at our Baptism, Vowing, Promising, and Engaging over the Symbols of Christ's Body and Blood; and Swearing, as it were, with our Hands laid upon the Redeemer of our Souls, that we will henceforth walk in Newness of Life. And what doth *this* mean, but to bind us with the most Solemn Securities, and under the most dreadful Penalties, to renounce the Devil and all his Works; to deny all the Lusts of the Flesh, so as not to follow or be led by them; and not only to offer up our Hearts and Spirits unto the God of Purity, but to present even our Bodies a living Sacrifice, Holy and Acceptable to him? And for the farthering of all these Noble Ends, this Mystery is, in the Fourth place, the very Means of Grace and Salvation, an Instrument that conveys to us the present Possession of all necessary and suitable Assistances, and a Title under Seal to all the Evangelical Promises; and particularly to this, that he that persevereth unto the end, the same shall *be saved*; and that to them who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for Glory and Honour, and Immortality, God will render Eternal Life, *Rom. 2. 7.* And what doth *this* mean too,

too, but that we should grow in Grace; that we must not grieve the good Spirit of God, whereby we are Sealed to the day of Redemption; but that we should be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his Might, and give all manner of diligence to make our Calling and Election unto Grace sure and effectual, by adding to our Faith, Virtue (or Courage) and to Virtue, Knowledge; and to Knowledge, Temperance; and to Temperance, Patience; and to Patience, Godliness; and to Godliness, Brotherly Kindness; and to Brotherly Kindness, Charity; Charity, in the highest degree, to all Mankind, and even to our Enemies? Thus, you see, the nature of the Ordinance it self is such, that it is not only highly useful for the present, but of mighty Importance for the future; it hath a tendency forward; and it drives at mighty Ends, which our endeavours are to be employ'd about, after the Celebration of it is over; that we may be more and more *Partakers of the Divine Nature*, and come every day nearer and nearer to the Life of God.

TO confirm this still, we may observe, Secondly, That those very Preparations which are required in order to our worthy Communicating, do all look the same way, and have a direct tendency to the
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same purpose. Thus Faith, or the hearty belief of the truth of our Religion upon those Evidences and Motives it carries with it, is naturally productive of constant Obedience to the Precepts of it, throughout the whole course of our lives. For as it discovers to us the Folly, the Shamefulness, and the bitter Fruits of Sin; so it shews us on the other hand the excellence of Virtue, and the beauty of Holiness. It proposes Christ's Yoke as an easie thing, especially to such as make a due use of the Spirits Assistance, and accustom themselves to the familiar practice of Religion. And though at the first entrance upon a Life of Holiness, there may be many difficulties for us to grapple with, Affections to be regulated, evil Habits to be eradicated, Pleasures and secular Advantages to be denied, when they stand in competition with our Duty; and though in the progress of our life many temptations from within and without us are to be resisted; many hardships and tryals to be expected, and abundance of discouragements of several kinds to be met with before we die; yet we learn from our Religion, that the present satisfactions which attend a course of Virtue are so great, and the future Rewards which are to crown it, are so endless

less and unspeakable, that upon weighing the one against the other, we cannot but conclude, that neither the Pleasures nor the Sufferings of this life are worthy, in the least measure, to be compared with the Glory which shall be revealed. Now if we bring such a Faith as this with us to the Sacrament, if we be strong and stablish'd in it, this alone will naturally serve to defend us as with a Shield *from all Fiery Darts of the Devil*; and to render us puissant enough to *overcome the World*, 1 Joh. 5. But to prepare us the better still for an uninterrupted course of Virtue, we are moreover to repent us thoroughly for all our past Sins, and to present our selves before God with new Hearts and new Spirits, which is not required as a Temporary Disposition, to be brought only at this time before the Altar, there to languish and die with Vows that are Abortive, and that yield either no Fruits at all, or at least no perfect Fruits of Repentance: No, this is to be the beginning of a new life, the first rise and starting towards the Race that is set before us; and as we run it, our Repentance must improve and grow, from Shame and Sorrow for Sin, to an Hatred of it; from this Hatred of it, to strong Resolutions against it; and from those

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Resolutions against it, to an utter abandoning and forsaking of it, abstaining not only from all sorts, but as far as 'tis possible, from all *appearance of evil*, 1 Thes. 5. 22. In like manner those Bowels of Mercy and Kindness, which we put on at this time, are to entender our Nature for ever, and to produce in us such large and generous Affections, as may extend, not only to our Brethren and Friends, and to the Family of Christ, but to the whole Offspring of *Adam*; to whom we are so to open our Compassions, that such as are within our reach may participate, those of our Bread, those of our Instructions, all of our good Wishes and Prayers, in imitation of that most blessed Pattern and Idea of Charity, *who went about doing Good*, Heb. 10. 38. Briefly, all other Spiritual Graces, as Humility, Meekness, Patience, Self-denial, Heavenly-mindedness, and the like, wherewith our Souls are to be arrayed and adorned at this Solemnity; if we consider the tendency of them, they are so many *initial* Virtues, to be improved and heightened still by the continual practice of them; so that from Acts they may turn into Dispositions, and from Dispositions may grow into Habits, which will quite change, purifie, and raise our Nature, *till we all come in the Unity of the Faith*,

Faith, and of the Knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect Man, unto the measure of the Stature of the fulness of Christ, Ephes. 4. 13.

I have the more particularly insisted upon this, to shew you the necessity of your Watchfulness and Industry after this blessed Solemnity is over. You must not, by any means, sit down presently, as if the work of the Day, and the business of your Souls were quite done. You must ever bear it in your minds, that Christianity requires a *life of Virtue*: You must carry a steady Eye upon the Scope and *Design* of our Holy Religion; and employ all your utmost endeavours in the vigorous pursuit of its noble End. *Brethren* (saith the Apostle) *I count not my self to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before; I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, Phil. 3. 13, 14.* And, as it follows there, *Let us, as many as be perfect, be thus minded; still running and stretching as hard as we can, towards the end of our Faith and Hope, by an earnest pursuit of whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are love-*
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ly, and whatsoever things are of good Report, Phil. 4. 8. Remember, I beseech you, that this and other instituted Ordinances, though they bring great Peace and Comfort to pious Souls by the present Administration of them, they are still instrumental Helps to carry on the main Purpose and Will of God, even our *Sanctification*. So that if we do not use this Ordinance, as an Instrument of improving and perfecting Holiness, and as a Means pursuant thereunto, whatever Relish and Pleasure it carries with it for the present, it will not avail us as to the main.

FOR the benefits which are conveyed to all well-disposed Hearts by this Sacrament are, not only the enlivening Influences of Christ's Spirit, called Christ's *Spiritual Body and Blood*, (because they flow, and are derived from him, as he is the Head of his Church, and the Disposer of all those Blessings which are the Fruits of his Intercession; (but moreover the Pardon of Sin past, and a Title to an happy Resurrection, and Eternal life to come. Now as the First of these, the Influences of Christ's Spirit are intended to transform us into the Image of God, and to con-naturalize our Spirits to the Nature of God; so are the latter, the Effects

fects of his pure Love and Goodness, whereby he rewards those that resemble him by a similitude of Nature. I speak now, not of God's general love of *Benevolence*, which moves him to do good to us as we are meerly his Creatures, without any regard had to our probity, or improbity; in which sence he is said to have *loved the World*, Joh. 3. 16. But of that particular Love, which Divines call Love of *Friendship* and *Complacency*, the formal Object whereof, is *Righteousness*, or a Rectitude of Nature conformable in a great measure to his own, as the Psalmist tells us, *Pf. 11. 7. The Righteous Lord loveth Righteousness, his Countenance doth behold the upright.* This is a ray of his own Glory; and the Correspondence thereof to his own Divine Perfections is the true Ground and Reason of that *especial* Love he bears to some more than he bears to others; because it is impossible but he must love the Image of himself where-ever he finds it, and as impossible for him to love any Man without it, so as to be pleased and delighted with the Object: And accordingly, the more or less this Image doth resemble him, the greater or less are the Degrees and Measures of his Love. The Reason therefore of this Love being drawn from
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that Godlike Frame and Disposition of Mind, which is wrought in Men by the gracious Energy of Gods Spirit, and their own kindly compliance with his Operations, 'tis a senceless thing to depend upon those effects of his Love, which I have now mentioned, *Forgiveness of Sin, and a Title to Everlasting Happiness*; unless we be in some measure Holy, Just, and Good, as the ever-blessed God is; these being Perfections which he loves, because they are his *own*. Hence it appears, that though we go to the blessed Sacrament with Religious and Devout Minds, yet if we go not on to answer the great End of Christianity, the bare Reception of it can never be enough to answer our own expectations; because it is a Relative Ordinance that looks forward upon a Christian Life; for the leading whereof, this Mystery lays all possible Obligations upon us, and takes all possible Securities at our hands here at the Altar of God.

THIS being cleared, give me leave now to recommend unto you these following Directions, that you may not receive this Sacrament, and the Grace of God in vain, but may, in one sense, as the Founder of this Ordinance did in another, *see of the Travel of your Souls, and be satisfied.*

I. HAVE

1. HAVE a very great care, that you relapse not into any known and wilful Sins, of which 'tis presum'd you have repented; and especially beware of such as you have been most *apt* and *inclined* to commit. People are subject to different Vices; either by means of their different Constitutions, or by means of their different Ages, or by means of their different Opinions, and sometimes too, by means of their different Callings. For tho' those Callings may be Innocent in themselves, nay commendable in respect of their use for the publick Good; yet by means of Mens own corrupt Dispositions, they are accidentally apt to betray them to various sorts of Wickedness; some to Luxury, some to Wantonness, some to Pride, and most to Frauds and Injustice; a bitter root of Covetousness spreading generally through all Secular Vocations, though it always hurts the Soil, and many times is the Bane of the Proprietor, however it be thought a *thrifty* Vice. *Here then*, every one must carefully observe which are his *own Iniquities*, the Sins that do so *easily* beset him; and accordingly must stand upon the strictest Watch, to guard himself from all dangers of relapsing, especially from such dangers as he is most ready to fall into

upon any occasion. For as the Devil is always most busie about Men when they have been doing their Souls good, to lay his *old* Snares in their way, and, if they fail, to minister to them fresh and *new* Temptations; so is their yielding to those Temptations, of very mischievous and deadly consequence.

1. IT is an Act of the highest *Perfidiousness*, to be false to those Sacred Obligations which we have now taken upon us after the most Solemn manner, in the presence of God and his Holy Angels, and over that broken Body of Christ which was given in Sacrifice as well to expiate as to destroy the works of the Devil. Therefore (saith the Preacher) *When thou vowest a Vow unto God, defer not to pay it, for he hath no pleasure in Fools; pay that which thou hast vowed. Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow, and not pay.* Eccles. 5. 4, 5.

2. IT is an Act of inexcusable Hardiness and *Presumption*, to return to those Impieties which have already cost us so dear. Who but a true Penitent can be sensible what the Terrours of God are, when he awakens a sleepy Conscience? What that Shame is, which tinctures the Forehead at the secret remembrance of ones Guilt? What those Dolours are which

which corrode the Heart, like Vipers which gnaw the Womb that bears them? What those throws and Agonies are, which the Soul endures when it comes to be ruffled by the hand of God? And how violent the Pangs and Convulsions of a new Birth are, when so many inveterate Habits come to be torn up out of ones Breast by the Roots? Repentance is a most painful thing, if it be Genuine and Hearty, when a poor Wretch is a recovering out of that miserable State, wherein a long course and trade of Wickedness hath plunged him; and I think 'tis *Oecumenius* that hath somewhere observed, *that 'tis no easie matter to fall back again into such a course of Life, as hath once put one to so much expence of Shame, Sorrow, and Vexation.* The sense and experience of smart, is naturally apt to make Men very fearful of being wounded any more: So that when they relapse into a wicked State with so much Facility, it is a certain Sign, that either their smart was not pungent and acute enough, or else that they are of very hardy and desperate Spirits, that can break through all the Pricks and Twinges of Conscience to rush upon the Pikes again.

3. IT is the ready way to lose all the Profit of Repentance, though it were never so chargeable and costly. Therefore is Apostacy compared to the most odious and filthy Spectacle; to a *Dog's licking up his Vomit*, and to the wallowing again of a *Sow in the mire*, 2 Pet. 2. 22. Nor can it be, but such Creatures must needs appear abominable in the sight of God, because his Love and Hatred still go along with the Reasons of them; which are never grounded upon any partiality towards Mens Persons, but upon a just view of their Qualifications and Tempers; so that as these vary from better to worse, and from Purity turn to Corruption, so they become instead of Objects of Gods Love, the Objects of his Hatred, which always runs out in a direct course against all Impiety, and still follows it at the heels: and hence is the terrible Menace in the Prophet Ezekiel, *When the Righteous Man turneth away from his Righteousness, and committeth Iniquity, and doth according to all the Abominations that the Wicked Man doth, shall he live? All his Righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: in his Trespasse that he hath Trespased, and in his Sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die*, Ezek. 18. 24. This is not only one
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of God's immutable Decrees, but moreover the natural Result of Relapses, from the common method and course of Things; especially when a Man's Relapses are frequent, habitual, and *lasting*.

4. FOR that which is further considerable, is, That the Recovery of such Men is very difficult and uncertain. St. Peter, speaking of some miserable Converts, who, though they had been cleansed from their Heathen Sins, upon their Embracing of Christianity, fell back again into that wretched State out of which they had been delivered, saith, *That since after they had escaped the Pollutions of the World through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they were again intangled therein and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning; and that it had been better for them not to have known the way of Righteousness, than after they had known it, to have turned aside from the holy Commandment delivered unto them,* 2 Pet. 2. 20, 21. I confess, he speaks there of their Apostacy from Christ's Religion to those abominable Impurities which they had customarily practis'd while they were yet Pagans; which was Wickedness in the highest degree, far beyond any Vice, I hope, that hath been acted by any who have been at the Lord's

Table. But yet the thing is in a very great measure applicable to those, who having devoted themselves to God by this Federal Mystery, take the confidence afterwards to let themselves loose again to their Enormities, wherewith they had polluted their Souls and Consciences before. The last State of those Men must needs be worse than the first; and that according to the *Nature* of the thing it self. For hereby Vice becomes familiar with them: It loseth that ugly and ghastly Aspect, which at first makes it appear very shameful and frightful; their Acquaintance with it makes it the more friendly and free, like ones conversing with the Devil, that by degrees wears off that Horror, which is ready to strike another through at the very Thoughts of his Appearing. There is naturally such Turpitude in Wickedness, and so contrary it is to our Reason and true Interest, that an innocent Person, when solicited to it, is apt to be startled at the first Motion; and if he be perswaded to act it, he cannot but feel great Remorse and Anguish in his Mind after the Commission. But Custom and Familiarity directly tends not only to remove that Fear and Shame, which was once such Guards to the Mind, but moreover
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to make the Conscience hard and crusty ; like Flesh seared with an hot Iron, so that it loseth the faculty of Sensation. And when a Man is come to such a wretched pass, it is as impossible for him to Repent and come to himself again, without the mighty Assistance of God's Spirit, as it is to live, and move, and breathe in a Grave. And what Reason and Grounds are there to expect that *extraordinary* Assistance, after such monstrous Provocations given, notwithstanding the strictest Ties and Engagements to the contrary ? We read in Scripture, of *Resisting*, of *Grieving*, and of *Quenching* the Spirit. Nor is it possible for those, who were once enlightened at the other Sacrament, and afterwards at this have tasted of the *heavenly Gift*, and been made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good Word of God, and the Powers of the World to come : 'Tis not *possible*, I say, for such to fall of to a vitious Course of Life, but by contumeliously intreating the Spirit of Grace, by offering great Violence against his strivings, by spoiling his holy Workmanship, and by bringing to nought those Virtues and Perfections of Nature, which were the Results and Effects of his Divine Operation. And what is all this, but the next way to
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stifle and put an end to all his Motions, and to force him utterly to depart? Because these Hostilities thus acted against the clear Light of Reason, and the loud Clamours of Conscience, cannot proceed from any other cause, but from Wills that are obstinately set upon Evil, and from Affections that are desperately in love with that which necessarily leadeth to Destruction. For it is to be supposed, that whoever comes to this tremendous Mystery, must, if he comes with sincerity of Heart, carry with him these Convictions, That the Religion he professeth is of God; That Christ sealed it upon the Cross with that Blood, whereof there is a Representation in this Mystery; That the Covenant between God and Mankind is immutable; That eternal Life therein promised is to be chosen before the whole World; That a Life of Sanctity is the certain way to it; That Virtue is Eligible of it self, and for the Peace and Satisfaction it rewards them with in this Life, beyond the gross and transient Pleasures of the Flesh; and that it is the extreamest Folly for a Man to chuse those Courses which bring a kind of Hell to him, before he arrives at that which burns with Fire and Brimstone. There is no understanding and serious Person

Person, but must grant all this and more: And therefore to Relapse into a State of Wickedness, after so many Vows, after so many Convictions, and consequently after so many Reluctancies and Struglings of Conscience, can proceed from no other Cause but the strong Malignity of a *carnal Mind, which is perfect enmity against God*, utterly inconsistent with the things of the Spirit, *Rom, 8.*

THESE are the Reproaches and Dangers of Relapsing into a wicked State of Life, after the reception of this Sacrament; and should a Man die in such a wretched Condition, I tremble to consider what an endless State of Misery he must drop into next, because (as I have already shew'd) nothing but entire Probity of Mind, and a vertuous Temper, can capacitate or dispose us for the Inheritance of the Saints in Light. I do not now speak of Sins of Ignorance, of Inadvertency, of Infirmary, and humane Weakness. For as there is no possible sufficient Fence against them, so there is no strict Obligations upon us to keep our selves free entirely from them; nor are these the Sins which the Word of God cries out upon so, as to threaten them with eternal Death, or with the Derelictions of Christ's Spirit. No; it is sinning with

with an high hand, and against an Honest Conscience; and against Stipulations and Promises which were in our Power to perform; this is that presumptuous acting, which lays Men naked and destitute of the Grace of God in this Life, and leaves them exposed to God's everlasting Displeasure in the next.

YOU have therefore great need, as soon as this Solemnity is over, as to bow your Knees to the Father of Lights, from whom every good and perfect Gift cometh, that he would now hold up your goings in his Paths, that your Footsteps may not slide; so to be very circumspect and diligent your selves, *to make streight Paths for your feet* (as the Author to the Hebrews speaks) *lest any Man should fail of the Grace of God; lest any Man should turn Fornicator or Prophanes Person, as Esau, Who for one morsel of bread sold his birthright.* For ye know, how that afterward, when he would have inherited the Blessing, he was rejected; *for he found no place of Repentance, (no way of changing his Father's mind) though he sought it earnestly with tears,* Heb. 12.

C H A P. XIII.

Of Perseverance.

I HAVE discoursed against Relapsing into a sinful course, not as if it were sufficient for us to forbear going backward, or to stand at a stay, but because in order to our progress in Virtue, it is the first thing necessary, to stand upon your Legs, and to be in a moving and walking posture.

2. THE second thing therefore we are to be careful of, is, to remember the Promises and Resolutions we have made, and to pursue them so as to transmit them into a *settled Practice* of all manner of Virtue. This Direction consists of several Branches.

1. WE are to keep our Vows of Amendment as *fresh* in our Memories as 'tis possible. For the Understanding being the original Principle of Action, which governs the Lower Faculties of the Soul, according to those Idea's and Notions that it works by it self, it is impossible to act with any certain regularity, when a Man doth not *Apprehend*, or doth not *Remember* what he is to do. Notions that are quite

quite lost have no more Power and Influence upon us, than if we had never entertained them : And this is one great cause of the Decay of Religion, that Men do not sufficiently charge their Duty upon their Memories, nor revolve their Obligations in their Minds as they should do, but lay aside the thoughts of their former *Engagements*, like those unfruitful Hearers St. James speaks of, who though they find by the Precepts of Christ how Undeified and Pure their whole Man should be; yet inconsiderately drop all care of cleansing themselves from their Pollutions, as those *who behold their natural face in a glass*, and then go their ways, straightway forgetting *what manner of Men they were*; that is, what Spots there are in their Faces which are necessary to be wiped off, *Jam. i. 23, 24.* when the consideration of those Resolutions we made at the Lord's Table, doth slide so soon out of the mind, it is impossible to conceive how they should bring any Fruit unto Perfection, though many were serious and strong for the time, because they are not rooted enough in the Heart to spring up, like Corn cast into the Bosom of a *Kindly* Soyl, but are lost presently for want of deep digestion, like Seed scatter'd by the way side, upon stony ground, which
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lies a little, to be picked up by the next Bird that comes. Due Consideration is very powerful to Invigorate the Faculties of the Soul, and to make them productive of a New Life ; because it keeps the mind in such a constant motion as maintains the whole Soul at its daily Work. Be sure therefore often to renew the remembrance of those Vows, which you made to God at this Covenant-Feast ; consider and meditate upon them every day, as you should upon your Latter End ; or, that I may allude to *Moses* in another case, *Lay up those Vows in your heart, and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as Phylacteries before your eyes ; and think of them when you sit in your Houses, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up, Deut. 11. 18, 19.*

2. THE next business is, to transmit them into *Practice*. For neither are lazy Wishes to any purpose ; nor can feeble Resolutions or faint Endeavours ever answer the great Ends of Christianity. As Virtue is acquired by single Acts, so is it Improved by repeated exercise, and Perfected by the assiduous Discipline of Perseverance. 'Tis a mistake to think, that Christ's Spirit works after such a Physical Manner, as to Transform a Man
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perfectly in a *moment*, or to make him compleatly Religious all at once, by a sudden and uncontrollable *Infusion* of Habitual Holiness. His Operations are successive; alluring, stirring, and strengthening Men to perfect Holiness in the fear of God gradually; and by helping them to Rectifie and Refine Humane Nature more and more, just as *evil* Custom helps to *deprave* it. Therefore the *Practice* of Virtue is absolutely necessary, because it cannot be thought how the frequent Lusts of the Flesh can otherwise be mortified, or how a crooked Disposition can otherwise be Reformed and streightned; or how inveterate Habits can otherwise be eradicated to the full.

3. THIS, Thirdly, must be a *settled* Practice, a State, a Tenour, a *Life* of Virtue. To resolve one Day upon a regular Progress, and then to let those Resolutions go off with ones first Sleep, is but a parting with ones Sins in a kind of pet, like the parting of Lovers, whom the next opportunity reconciles. Many things may provoke People to fall out with their Lusts for a while; either the penetrating faculty of the Word of God; or a sudden and surprising prospect of Hell; or the snubbings and lashes of a restless Mind; or some outward Calamity
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that reneweth the smart of an old Sore, and revives the sense of former Guilt, as the Imprisonment of *Jacob's* Sons in *Egypt* brought it into their fresh remembrance how guilty they had been concerning their Brother, *Gen. 42*. Nor do I deny, but such Passions are sometimes preparatory to a true Repentance, if right reason steps in before the fit be over, and obtains full Liberty of Audience. But if these motions of the Soul do not settle into a composed *State* of *Virtue*, but are only Temporary and Transient things, like a *Morning Cloud*, and the early *Dew* that goeth away, to use the Prophet's comparison, *Hos. 6. 4*. They cannot profit as to the main, because they fall short of the *Ends* of our Religion, being not effectually perfective of our Natures.

4. F O R, Fourthly, our Resolutions should pass into the practice of *Universal Holiness*. The Perfection of God himself consists in the Infinite Glory and Rectitude of his Nature, that he is most perfectly Wise, Just, Good, Pure, True, and the like; and that there is such an entire Harmony within himself, that there cannot be the least Aberration or Declension of his Will from the Infinite Reason of his Mind; but that in all his Actions his Power is conducted by Rea-

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sons that are suitable to his own Perfections; that is, by reasons that are perfectly Just and Good. And upon this account it is, that he is perfectly happy in himself, because he hath the Possession and Enjoyment of the most Excellent and Infinite Good. Now this shews, that as our Happiness doth consist in our drawing near unto God, by a Rectitude, Goodness, and Purity of Nature, as far as it is consistent with our Finite and Mortal condition; so our Perfection doth consist in an *entire* and *Universal* Conformity of our Wills and Affections to *His*, when we chuse and refuse, Love and Hate in every Particular, just as he commands us. This, I say, is our *Perfection*; because, hereby we are conducted as he himself is, by the Infinite Reason of his Mind; only, indeed, we are Govern'd by it at *Second Hand*: For as *His* Will goes along by the prescriptions of his own *Reason*, which is the Law of all his Actions; so we go along by the Prescriptions of his *Will*; and then we are perfect as God is; I mean still, according to the capacities of Humane Nature. It is necessary therefore, that our Practice of Virtue be *Universal* and *Uniform*, or that we habitually live according to the *whole* Will of God; because where we
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come short of this *Uniformity*, there we come short of that *Perfection*, and by consequence, of that *Happiness*, which is the great scope and design of Christianity. This is the meaning of Divines, when they tell us, that there must be in us a *Perfection of Parts*, though we are not capable of a perfection of *Degrees*; that is, there must be the presence of every *Virtue*, though there be at the same time such a mixture of *Corruption* with our noblest *Endowments*, that we cannot exercise them in that high pitch as we shall do in the next Life, when we shall be of *perfect Stature*; even as a Child in the Womb hath all the necessary *Parts* and *Lineaments* of a Man, though it will be long before he comes to a full Growth and Proportion.

• CONSIDER then, I beseech you, and you especially who have been Partakers of the Blessed Viands of Immortality, what strict Obligations ye have entred into, and what manner of Persons ye ought to be in all *Holy Conversation* and *Godliness*. You are now to fulfil all Righteousness; you are now to deny all Ungodliness and Worldly Lusts; you are now to do, as the Combatants in the old Olympick Games, to lay aside every weight that might oppress, and every In-

cumbrance that might intangle you, and to run with Perseverance the race that is set before you; and you are to remember, what the Apostle tells us, *Jam. 2. 10. Whosoever shall keep the whole Law, and yet offend in one point, is become guilty of all;* that is, Guilty of Disobedience, and Obnoxious to Punishment, as well as if he had violated all.

THAT you may not miscarry therefore, through the Wilful neglect of any necessary Duty, or by the presumptuous Commission of any heinous Sin, lay daily before your Eyes the perfect Law of Liberty, which our Blessed Saviour and his Apostles have left us as the Infalible Rule of a perfectly *Christian Life*. And for your more easie performance, I shall now briefly represent to you a *Scheme and Platform* of Virtue, agreeable to those Precepts which are scatter'd up and down in the Holy Scriptures, as a very fit and proper Undertaking, to come at the close of this whole Subject.

I begin with that which is the source and Principle of our Actions, whether they be good or evil, the *inner Man*. *Keep thy Heart with all diligence; for out of it are the Issues of Life,* Prov. 4. 25. *As a good Man cut of the good Treasure of the Heart, bringeth forth good things,*

things, so an evil *Man* out of the evil *Treasure* bringeth forth evil things, *Matth.* 12. 35. For out of the *Heart* proceed evil *Designs*, *Murders*, *Adulteries*, *Fornications*, *Thefts*, *false Witness*, *Blasphemies*, *Mat.* 15. 19. It is a good thing therefore, that (principally in this sense) the *Heart* be established with *Grace*, *Heb.* 13. 9. Blessed are the pure in *Heart*, for they shall see *God*, *Matth.* 5. 8.

THE good things which come out of this hidden *Treasure* are usually divided into three general kinds, as *St. Paul* hath reckoned them, *Tit.* 2. 12. *Sobriety*, *Righteousness*, and *Godliness*: Under which three *Heads* are comprehended all the several *Duties* which relate to our selves, and to our *Neighbours*, and to *God* himself. According to which Division, I shall proceed:

FIRST, to lay before you those *Virtues* which more immediately relate to your selves in a separate and *Personal* capacity, as I find them proposed in the *Holy Scriptures*.

LEARN of *Christ* in the very first place, to be lowly in *Heart*, *Mat.* 11. 29. *God* hath respect unto the lowly, *Pf.* 138. 6. He giveth *Grace* unto the lowly, *Prov.* 3. 34. Be ye therefore clothed with *Humility*, 1 *Pet.* 5. 5. Let this mind be in

you, which was also in Christ Jesus; who being in the form of God, thought it no Robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no Reputation, and took upon him the form of a Servant, and was made in the likeness of Men; and being found in Fashion as a Man, he humbled himself and became Obedient unto Death, even the death of the Cross, Phil. 2. 5, 6, 7, 8. That no one of you be puffed up, 1 Cor. 4. 6. That ye be not high minded, but fear, Rom. 11. 20. That ye mind not high things, but condescend to Men of low Estate, Rom. 12. 16. That ye think not of your selves more highly than ye ought to think, but think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every Man the Measure of Faith, Rom. 12. 3. And that ye trust not in uncertain Riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy, 1 Tim 6. 17.

NEXT of Kin to this Virtue of Humility is that of Meekness; such a Beauty of the Mind, that it is called the Ornament of a meek and a quiet Spirit, which even in the sight of God is of great Price, 1 Pet. 3. 4. To recommend it unto us, God requires us to be (as he himself is) slow to wrath, Jam. 1. 19. To cease from Anger, Ps. 37. 8. Not to be angry without a cause, Mat. 5. 22. Nor to be angry in such a measure as to Sin; or to let

Let the Sun go down upon our Wrath, *Ephes.* 4. 26. But to put on Bowels of Mercy, Kindness, Meekness, Long-suffering, *Col.* 3. 12. And to let all Bitterness, and Wrath, and Anger, and Clamour, and Evil-speaking, be put away from us, with all Malice, *Ephes.* 4. 31.

THESE two Virtues being deeply ra- *Patience.*
 dicated, will naturally produce in us great Temper and Firmness of Mind in any grievous Circumstances. God himself, though he be provoked every day, is long-suffering towards us. The Blessed Jesus endured all the Contradictions of Sinners against himself, *Heb.* 12. 3. And when he suffered, he threatned not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously, *1 Pet.* 2. 23. And all this, to leave us an Example that we should follow his Steps, *1 Pet.* 2. 21. That we should possess our Souls in Patience, *Luk.* 21. 19. That we be patient in Tribulations, *Rom.* 12. 12. That we endure Afflictions, *2 Tim.* 4. 5. That we endure to the End, *1 Pet.* 1. 13. And when any fiery Tryal comes, that we should not wonder, or be troubled, as if some strange thing hapned; but rejoyce, inasmuch as we are partakers of Christ's Sufferings; that when his Glory shall be re-

vealed, we may be glad also with exceeding Joy, *1 Pet. 4. 12, 13.*

Mortification.

THIS leads on the slighting of all things here below, when they stand in competition with the love of God and a good Conscience. *Love not the World, neither the things that are in the World; if any Man love the World, the love of the Father is not in him, 1 Joh. 2. 15.* Therefore, let your Conversation be without Covetousness, *Heb. 13. 5.* Lay not for your selves Treasures upon Earth, *Matth. 6. 19.* If Riches encrease, set not your Heart upon them, *Psf. 62. 10.* Neither take any (anxious) thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on, *Matth. 6. 25.* But use this World, as those that use it not, for the Fashion of this World passeth away, *Heb. 7. 31.*

Heavenly-Mindedness.

INSTEAD of this, set your Affection on things above, *Col. 3. 2.* Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and his Righteousness, *Matth. 6. 33.* Let your Conversation be in Heaven, *Phil. 3. 20.* Walk worthy of the Vocation where-with ye are called; and put off, concerning the former Conversation, the old Man which is corrupt according to the deceitful Lusts; and be renewed in

in the Spirit of your mind, *Ephes.* 4. 22, 23. For to be carnally minded, is Death ; but to be Spiritually minded, is Life and Peace, *Rom.* 8. 6.

FROM this Heavenly-mindedness, naturally springs another great Duty ; viz. to be satisfied with such a share and Portion of this World, as it shall please God to dispense to us ; to be pleased with such things as we have, *Heb.* 13. 5. And with that Food which God shall judge convenient for us, *Prov.* 3. 8. And having Food and Raiment therewith to be content, *1 Tim.* 6. 8. Contentment.

WHOSOEVER will come after me, *Self-denial.* let him deny himself, saith our Saviour, *Mark.* 8. 34. And these are necessary Acts of Self-denial ; to cast down Imaginations, and every thing that exalteth it self against the Knowledge of God, and to bring into Captivity every thought to the Obedience of Christ, *2 Cor.* 10. 5. To count all things but loss, for the Excellency of the Knowledge of Christ Jesus, *Phil.* 3. 8. Not to trust in your selves, that ye are Righteous, *Luke* 18. 9. But to renounce your own Righteousness, *Phil.* 3. 9. To deny all Ungodliness and Worldly Lusts, *Tit.* 2. 12. To part with a right Hand, and right Eye, *Matth.* 5. 29, 30. (that is, with every
the

the dearest and most useful thing, when it is an occasion of Sin, or an hindrance to Virtue) and to forsake Houses, Lands, Father, Mother, and all that a Man hath for the sake of Christ, *Luke 14. 33.*

Purity
of
Heart.

TO this, add that other Evangelical Grace, of Purity of Heart : which is, when you mortifie your Members which are upon the Earth, Fornication, Uncleaness, inordinate Affection, and evil Concupiscence; and when laying aside all Naughtiness, and all Guile, and all Hypocrisie, as new born Babes you desire the sincere Milk of the Word, that you may grow thereby, *1 Pet. 2. 1, 2.*

Tempe-
rance.

IN order to this, Temperance is a very necessary Virtue. Every Man that striveth for the Mastery, is Temperate in all things, *1 Cor. 9. 25.* And to this purpose are those Directions, that we should cast off the works of Darknes; that we should walk honestly, as in the Day, not in Rioting and Drunkenness; not in Chambering and Wantonness, *Rom. 13. 12, 13.* Not in Excess of Wine, Revellings, and Banquetings, *1 Pet. 4. 3.* Not to suffer our Hearts to be overcharged with Surfeiting, *Luke 21. 34.* But to abstain from such Fleishly Lusts, as War against the Soul, *1 Pet. 2. 11.* To add to our Knowledge, Temperance,
2 Pet.

2 *Pet.* 1. 6. To keep under the Body, and bring it into Subjection, 1 *Cor.* 9. 27.

AND for the Improving and perfect-^{Fortitude.}ing of all these Virtues, we are to arm our selves with Resolution and Courage; to watch, to stand fast in the Faith, to quit our selves like Men, to be strong, 1 *Cor.* 16. 13. To resist the Devil, *Jam.* 4. 7. To endure Temptation, *Jam.* 1. 12. Not to fear them which kill the Body, but are not able to kill the Soul; but rather to fear him which is able to destroy both Soul and Body in Hell, *Mat.* 10. 28. Finally, to be strong in the Lord, and in the Power of his Might; and to put on the whole Armour of God, that we may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil; and having done all, to stand, *Ephes.* 6. 10, 11, 13.

AS for those Christian Virtues which have reference to *others*, they are of great Variety, according as we stand related differently unto them.

SOME more immediately concern our respective *Families*: So Husbands are to love their Wives, even as Christ loved the Church, *Ephes.* 5. 25. Not to be bitter against them, *Col.* 3. 19. But to dwell with them according to Knowledge, giving Honour to the Wife, as to the weaker

Virtues concerning private Families.

weaker Vessel, and as being Heirs together of the Grace of God, that their Prayers be not hindered, *1 Pet.* 3. 7. Wives are to submit themselves to their own Husbands, as unto the Lord, *Ephes.* 5. 22. Not learning to be Idle, or to wander about from House to House, neither to be Tattlers or Busy-bodies, speaking things which they ought not, *1 Tim.* 5. 13. But to be in Behaviour as becometh Holiness, to be Discreet, Chaste, Keepers at home, Good, Obedient to their own Husbands, that the Word of God be not Blasphemed, *Tit.* 2. 3. 5. Parents must not provoke their Children to Wrath, but to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, *Ephes.* 6. 4. And to lay up for them, *2 Cor.* 12. 14. Children on the other hand, to obey their Parents, in the Lord; for this is right. Honour thy Father and Mother (which is the first Commandment with Promise) that it may be well with thee, and thou may'st live long on the Earth, *Ephes.* 6. 1, 2, 3. Servants to be subject to their Masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward, *1 Pet.* 2. 18. Not answering again, not purloining, but shewing all good Fidelity, *Tit.* 2. 9. 10. Being Obedient with Fear and Trembling, in singleness
of

of Heart, as unto Christ; not with Eye-service as Men-pleasers, but as the Servants of Christ, doing the Will of God from the Heart. With good will doing service, as unto the Lord, and not to men. And ye Masters do the same things unto them; forbearing threatening; knowing that your Master also is in Heaven; neither is there respect of Persons with him, *Ephes. 6. 5, 6, 7, 9.*

SOME Virtues relate to *larger Soci-*
eties; as, Righteousness and Equity in *cieties.*
your Dealings. He hath shewed thee, *Justice.*
O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly? *Mich. 6. 8.* Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even the same to them, *Matth. 7. 12.* To do violence to no man, *Luc. 3. 14.* Not to make haste to be rich, *Prov. 28. 20.* By divers Weights and Measures, both which are alike abomination to the Lord, *Prov. 20. 10.* Not to go beyond or defraud our Brother in any matter, *1 Thes. 4. 6.* Not to do wrong, but rather to take it, *1 Cor. 6. 7.* But to have an honest conversation, *1 Pet. 2. 12.* In simplicity and godly sincerity, *2 Cor. 1. 12.* Because he that doth wrong, shall receive for the wrong which he hath done, and there is no respect of persons, *Col. 3. 25.*

Truth.

TO forbear all Fashood, Dissimulation and Insincerity. And so the Holy Scripture commands us, *Not to lye one to another, Col. 3. 9. but putting away all lying to speak every Man truth with his Neighbour, Ephes. 4. 25.* Because *lying lips are abomination to the Lord; but they that deal truly, are his delight, Prov. 12. 22.*

Candour.

TO be candid in our Behaviour towards all men. Not to be given to reviling, backbitings, whisperings, railings, evil surmisings or judging one another; but in all points to walk by the Rule of Charity, which suffereth long and is kind; which envieth not; which vaunteth not it self; which is not puffed up; which be-
haveth not it self unseemly; which seeketh not her own; which is not easily provoked; which thinketh no evil; which rejoyceth not in iniquity: but which rejoyceth in the truth; which beareth all things, believeth all things (that are good) hopeth all things, endureth all things, *1 Cor. 13. 4, 5, 6, 7.* and which covereth a multitude of Sins, *1 Pet. 4. 8.*

Mercy.

TO be merciful to the Necessitous. Using Hospitality without grudging, *1 Pet. 4. 9.* Visiting the Fatherless and Widows in their distress, *Jam. 1. 27.* Praying for the sick, *Jam. 5. 16.* teaching and admo-

admonishing one another, *Col.* 3. 16. Distributing to the necessity of Saints, *Rom.* 12. 13. Doing good to the poor, being rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for our selves a good foundation against the time to come, that we may lay hold on eternal life, *1 Tim.* 6. 18, 19.

TO be kind and obliging in our deportment; having compassion one of another, being pitiful and courteous, *1 Pet.* 3. 8. Being gentle, and easie to be entreated, *Jam.* 3. 17. bearing the infirmities of the weak; every one pleasing his Neighbour for his good to edification, *Rom.* 15. 1, 2. Comforting the feeble minded, supporting the weak, being patient towards all men, *1 Thes.* 5. 14. Rejoycing with them that rejoyce, and weeping with them that weep, *Rom.* 12. 15.

TO be kindly affectioned even to our Enemies. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-speaking be put away from you, with all malice, *Ephes.* 4. 21. Instead of rendring evil for evil, or railing for railing. *1 Pet.* 3. 9. Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and perse-

persecute you, *Matth. 5. 44.* Dearly be loved, avenge not your selves, but rather give place unto wrath; for it is written, *vengeance is mine: I will repay, saith the Lord.* Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, *Rom. 12. 19, 20.*

Modestly.

TO be modest and inoffensive in your familiar discourse. Swear not at all, *Matth. 5. 34.* Bless, but curse not, *Rom. 12. 14.* Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister Grace unto the hearers, *Ephes. 4. 29.* And let your speech be alway with Grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man, *Col. 4. 6.*

Peaceableness.

TO be lovers and makers of peace. If ye have bitter envying and strife in your Hearts, glory not, and lye not against the truth; this wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devillish; for where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work, *Jam. 3. 14, 15, 16.* Study therefore to be quiet, and do do your own business, *1 Thes. 4. 11.* Follow peace with all men, *Heb. 12. 14.* Be at peace among your selves;

selves, *1 Thes.* 5. 13. Seek peace, and ensue it, *1 Pet.* 3. 11. And follow after the things that make for peace, *Rom.* 14. 19. And if it be possible, and as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men, *Rom.* 12. 18.

FOR the obtaining of this, the greatest Blessing upon Earth ; such a perfect Peace as may resemble the State of the Blessed in Heaven ; there are other Virtues still, which relate directly to our Governours. To our Temporal Governours ; That we render to *Cæsar* the things that are *Cæsar's*, *Matth.* 22. 21. That we pay to all their dues ; Tribute to whom Tribute is due, Custom to whom Custom, Fear to whom Fear, Honour to whom Honour. *Rom.* 13. 7. That we submit our selves to every Ordinance of man for the Lord's sake ; whether it be to the King, as Supreme ; or unto Governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well : for so is the Will of God, *1 Pet.* 2. 13, 14. And that every Soul be subject unto the higher Powers : because there is no power but of God ; the powers that be, are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the Ordinance of God : and they that resist, shall receive to themselves damnation.

nation. Wherefore we must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for Conscience sake, *Rom. 13. 1, 2, 5.*

To our Spi-
ritual Go-
vernors.

TO our *Spiritual* Governors also, the Bishops and other Pastors of the Church. That we obey them that have the rule over us, and submit our selves: for they watch for our souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief, for that is unprofitable for us, *Heb. 13. 17.* That we know them which labour among us, and are over us in the Lord, and admonish us: That we esteem them very highly in love for their works, *1 Thes. 5. 12, 13.* That such as rule well, be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour (with toyl and hazard) in the word and doctrine, *1 Tim. 5. 17.*

To the
whole State
of the
Church.

TO the whole Estate and Body of the Church also. That we forsake not the assembling of our selves together, as the manner of some is, *Heb. 10. 25.* That we be not contentious about Circumstantials, where we have no such Custom, nor the Churches of God, *1 Cor. 11. 16.* That we endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace; because there is one Body, and one Spirit, even as we are called in one hope of our calling: One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father

ther of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all, *Ephes. 4. 3, 4, 5, 6.* Therefore, I beseech you, Brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no division among you; but that ye be perfectly joined in the same mind, and in the same judgment, *1 Cor. 1. 10.* And that ye give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentles, nor to the Church of God, *1 Cor. 10. 32.*

IF these things be in you and abound, you will be the better able to exercise those Virtues which relate immediately to the ever-blessed God: The Original whereof is, Love; according to that in *Matth. 22. 37.* Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. Whereby are understood the Three Faculties of a Man's Spirit, the Will, the Affections, and the Understanding: And with these we are said to love God, when they are vigorously employ'd about him; when out of a deep sense of the Glory of his Nature, and of his wonderful Goodness to his Creatures, especially to Mankind, we give up our selves entirely unto him, obeying his Pleasure, desiring and rejecting as he directs us; still having him in our Thoughts and entertaining our Minds with ravish-
Virtues relating unto God.
Love.
ing

ing Contemplations of his Divine Perfections. And this is that which in the Scripture-Language we call, The submitting unto God, *Jam.* 4. 7. The yielding of our selves unto God, *Rom.* 6. 13. Not the doing ones own Will, but the Will of God, *Jo.* 6. 38. The serving of him with Reverence and Godly fear, *Heb.* 12. 28. Delighting our selves in the Lord, *Psal.* 37. 4. And in one general Expression, our walking with God, as it is said of *Enoch*, *Gen.* 5. 22.

Devotion.

UPON full Convictions of his Infinite Greatness, and his All-sufficiency and Readiness to help us, there ariseth another Virtue, *viz.* Devotion ; That we offer up daily unto him the sacrifice of our lips, and the more valuable Oblation of a broken spirit, *Psal.* 51. That we pray without ceasing, *1 Thes.* 5. 17. That we offer up the Sacrifice of Praise to God continually ; that is, that we pretermitt no good Opportunities of making our Supplications and Addresses unto him.

Resignation

CONSEQUENT hereunto is, a Trust in him, a Dependance upon him, and an entire Resignation of our selves to his Care and Providence. That we cast not our confidence away, *Heb.* 10. 35. That we cast all our care on him, who careth

careth for us, *1 Pet.* 5. 7. That we commit the keeping of our Souls to him in well-doing, *1 Pet.* 4. 19. That we put our Trust in him, as the holy Psalmist speaks over and over ; and that even against hope we believe in hope, as it is said of *Abraham* the Father of the Faithful, *Rom.* 4. 18.

THE Contemplation of those amiable *Imitation.* Perfections in God, upon which these Virtues are grounded, is naturally apt to produce in us a most earnest Desire to *Resemble* him as far as it is possible ; that we be Holy, as he is Holy, *1 Pet.* 1. 15. That we be merciful, as he is merciful, *Luc.* 6. 36. And that we be perfect, as our heavenly Father is perfect, *Matth.* 5. 48.

AND because the Nature of God is *Universal* the measure and Rule of all Moral Perfection, and the Laws he hath given to Mankind from the beginning are so many Révelations of himself ; therefore it is necessary for us, Uniformly and Universally to observe those Laws, whether we find them written in our Nature, or in his Word. And this is the utmost Perfection that a Man is capable of in this Life, to shew our Love to him, our Dependance upon him, our profound Adoration

ration and Imitation of him; *viz.* Our keeping his Commandments. Let us hear the Conclusion of the whole matter, saith Solomon, *Fear God, and keep his Commandments ; for this is the whole Duty of Man, Eccles. 12. 13.*

I HAVE now done with all that I thought needful for you to Understand concerning this Sacrament. And whether it be the Necessity of Receiving it, or the Necessity of due Preparation, or the Quality of the Things preparatory to the Communion, or the Tendency of the Ordinance it self, or the Care to be taken after the Solemnity is over, you see what they all drive at in the End; *viz.* a *Sober, Righteous, and Godly Life.* And though in enumerating the several Particulars thereof, some Virtues may have escaped me, yet there are none, I think, untouched, but what are fairly reducible to some of those things, which I have mentioned: Things, which you cannot but say are suitable to Humane Reason: Things, which are highly Perfective of Humane Nature: Things, which are Good, Lovely, and of Infinite Satisfaction to our Minds: Things, which are Easie too, if we will but heartily

heartily Apply our Minds to the Practice of them, and make Use of that Divine Assistance which God giveth unto all that need it. I dare say, if you do these things, you shall never fall. And the very God of Peace Sanctifie you wholly, that your whole Spirit, Soul and Body, may be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

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